Minutes of the
Meeting of the Executive Committee
of the World Council of Churches
21-26 November, 2014
Paralimni, Cyprus

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1. Prayers

On 21 November, the executive committee attended the Divine Liturgy at the Aghia Napa Monastery, in Paralimni, Cyprus; the occasion was the Feast of the Entrance of Mary to the Temple. It was noted that many churches in Cyprus would be full on that day because people would be celebrating this feast.

On 22 November, the morning prayers (matins) took place at the Aghia Anna Church, in Paralimni, Cyprus. The day was the day dedicated to the memory of Philemon. The scripture readings were Philemon 1-25 and Luke 9:57-62.

On 23 November, the executive committee attended Divine Liturgy at the Aghios Georgios Exorinos Church, in Famagusta (in Greek: Ammochostos) in the occupied part of Cyprus. The scripture, Luke 12:16-26, was read in both Greek and English. Metropolitan Dr Vasilios of Ammochostos-Constantia (Church of Cyprus), host of the executive committee meeting, offered a brief homily in Greek. He spoke about the rich "fool" who gathered wealth only for himself as opposed to "wise" Joseph, in the Old Testament, who administered the harvest to feed all people in times of famine.

Fr Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca, associate general secretary for education and ecumenical formation and director of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, offered a homily in English. He observed that one's first impression of the scripture reading might be that Jesus is judging the rich. Jesus is not against wealth. The man had worked hard; God gave his blessing, and the land produced fruit. The man had so much production that he could no longer store more. The problem was in the man's perception of the goods: he only thought of himself, and not of the needs of others. Dr Sauca also reflected on fasting; he shared that when one is fasting, one should give what is not eaten to the poor and to widows, so that fasting can also be about sharing and managing goods. He invited everyone to abstain from thinking that we are possessors of the world, and instead to share what we have with others.

On 24 November, the morning prayers (matins) took place at the Aghios Georgios Church, in Sotira, Cyprus. The scripture readings were Philippians 3:20-4:3 and Luke 17:20-25. The day was dedicated to the memory of Clement (Bishop of Rome) and Peter (Bishop of Alexandria). Prayers were offered for a former staff colleague, Jean-Nicolas Bazin, who had passed away during the night between 21 November and 22 November.

On 25 November, the morning prayers (matins) took place at the Aghia Barbara Church, in Aghia Napa, Cyprus. The scripture readings were Galatians 3:23-3:5 and Matthew 5:24-34. The day was dedicated to the memory of St Catherine.

On 26 November, before beginning the morning prayers, Dr Ulysses Burley III (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) shared about the USA and ongoing issues relating to racism and police brutality; he noted that recently a young Black man in the United States had been killed by police, but the officer was let free and that this kind of occurrence was common. He invited prayers for the US, for this situation, and in particular for the ongoing issues of systemic racism. The scripture reading was Matthew 5:1-16. Dr Abuom noted that two weeks ago, David Goodburn (a former vice-moderator of the programme committee of the central committee) had passed away, and invited the executive committee to pray for David and his family.

2. Opening Actions

2.1 Welcome by Moderator and Hosting Committee

Dr Agnes Abuom (Anglican Church of Kenya), moderator of the central committee, moderated a general session. She welcomed everyone to the executive committee meeting and to Cyprus. She expressed her thanks to H.E. Metropolitan Dr Vasilios of Ammochostos-Constantia, and to the Church of Cyprus, for hosting this executive committee meeting.

She invited Metropolitan Vasilios to speak. He welcomed people to the house of the Diocese of Ammochostos-Constantia in the Church of Cyprus and to the executive committee meeting. He shared that part of the Diocese is located in the territory occupied by the Turkish army.

2.2 Roll Call

Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima (Ecumenical Patriarchate), vice-moderator of the central committee, called the roll of members present (see Appendix I).

2.3 Approval of Agenda

Dr Abuom moderated a decision session. Some changes to the agenda were suggested, after consulting with the leadership of the central committee.

The United Nations' Special Envoy to Cyprus would like to meet with the executive committee, and he would only be available on Monday, from 15:30-16:30.

The changes were approved by consensus. The overall agenda with the proposed changes was also approved by consensus.

2.4 Approval of Minutes

Dr Audeh B. Dr Quawas (Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem) proposed that the approval of the July 2014 minutes be deferred to the next meeting of the executive committee, so that people could have time to read the minutes before approving them. The minutes of February 2014 could be approved at this meeting.

The minutes of February 2014 were approved by consensus. There were no suggested changes to these minutes.

2.5 Approval of Sub-Committees (Membership)

H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Nifon of Targoviste (Romanian Orthodox Church) requested that he be moved from the finance sub-committee to the staffing, personnel and nominations sub-committee. Dr Abuom noted that many people from the Orthodox family are currently part of the staffing, personnel and nominations sub-committee. Metropolitan Nifon agreed to stay in the finance sub-committee for this meeting; however, for the next meeting, he requested a change.

Since some of the usual sub-committee moderators are absent, the following were agreed upon:

- Bishop Petra Bosse-Huber (Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland) will moderate the programme sub-committee.
- H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Nifon of Targoviste (Romanian Orthodox Church) will moderate the public issues sub-committee.

The revised membership of the sub-committees was agreed (see Appendix II).

2.6 CONSENSUS

Dr Abuom moderated a hearing session. She invited Ms Tara Tautari, special advisor for staff development and organisational learning, to speak about consensus decision-making. Ms Tautari shared that beginning the work together was an opportune moment to consider consensus, to check in with one another about our experiences with consensus this year, and to share collective wisdom as we move forward together vis-à-vis consensus. She referred to the booklet "Achieving Consensus: A Guide for Conducting Meetings". She noted that this book includes Rule XIX, which details the modalities of consensus.

She showed the executive committee the blue and orange indicator cards, and observed that people already have experience using these cards at the last executive and central committee meetings. She noted that these cards help the moderators of sessions if the group is consistent in using them. From her experience in observing how consensus has played out at recent meetings, she offered a few observations, and then a question.

Her first observation was that unless the group is willing to engage in genuine dialogue with one another, then consensus will remain elusive. To be genuine dialogue, there must be an environment that is respectful, mutually supportive, and empowering. Her second observation was that without prayer consensus is empty. Unless it is grounded in prayer, consensus will always have bruises and injuries. Her third observation was that the moderators have tremendous experience in moderating consensus. She underlined the need to trust that they have everything they need to guide everyone in using consensus. She noted that we hold each other mutually accountable for finding outcomes and for taking decisions that best meet the needs of the committee.

She invited the committee members to respond to these questions:
- What have been your experiences of consensus this year (understanding that consensus does not only happen in WCC circles)?
- If you were to offer one piece of advice to the group to help move forward together with consensus, what would that piece of advice be?

Responses were gathered as follows:
- H.E. Archbishop Dr Vicken Aykazian (Armenian Apostolic Church [Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin]) noted that while there has been a great deal of conversation about consensus, we have not talked about the importance of listening to each other and ensuring that the person in front of you has been heard.
- Bishop Dr Chibuzo Raphael Opoko, (Methodist Church Nigeria) shared that one of the challenges of consensus is that it takes a great deal of time to make a decision. He shared his experience of when they tried to use consensus in their Conference Connectional Council (CCC) which was a group used to making a decision by a simple majority. Consensus can be a bit laborious but he noted that at the end it gave everyone a sense of belonging. There was increased participation and it promoted collaboration among the people. By contrast, with a simple majority, he observed, those who were opposed had difficulty when the decision was being implemented, and they did not have passion. But when using consensus, everyone agreed that they felt it was their programme and could move with it. Consensus has its challenges but at the end of the day, it is worth it.

- Dr Abuom shared two points that had come out in her own context. One, coming from a highly parliamentary conversation, when she shares about consensus, there is interest. The question is how the consensus ethos can filter down to member churches that do not use consensus decision making. Two, she shared that consensus is also in the political field. They recently had a large meeting of inter-religious relations and she was the only woman on the panel. One of the frustrations with the democratic process is to ensure that minority voices are included. Churches may need to think about this more broadly. She wondered, given that the central committee will only be meeting in two years, how much the members will really be socialized into the process. The executive committee meets more regularly, but there should be something else that bears thinking about for the central committee to help better prepare people.
- Metropolitan Gennadios shared that at the central committee meeting in July, there were some difficulties and some members became angry, particularly in the conversation about committee membership. He shared that it might have been better to do it in a different, better way. We are a church organization, and not a parliament, therefore the way in which deliberations and decisions are carried out should reflect our spirituality. The crucial part is not to switch to a secular way of looking at the plenaries. According to the new rules, the central committee meets once every two years. The next experience for those who met in July 2014 will not be until June 2016. We need to think about training so that central committee members will be more familiar with that process.
- Rev. Dr Henriette Hutabarat-Lebang (Gereja Toraja) shared that consensus is a positive move, but it does take time. It is a new culture of conducting meetings that further emphasizes Christian values. It differs from times when there is a hot debate. For consensus, we have to be patient. Even though we have been using the method for some time, it is helpful that we keep evaluating it, and we keep naming that it is valuable and worth pursuing. She shared that it is also a good idea to just take time to be quiet and pray when we are experiencing challenges in meetings.

Ms Tautari informed the group that staff are intending to meet with commissions and advisory groups and she will spend time with them to orient them to consensus. Clearly there is a need for further orientation for central committee members, and that we need to be intentional about taking time to do this process well; when we do those things, it will be very helpful.

Mr Georges Lemopoulos, deputy general secretary, was invited to share a few words. He said that the importance of consensus is that we are invited to listen to one another and to understand one another. This is a very important stage. He shared that consensus is not simply making decisions; consensus is about building a common mind. There is tremendous opportunity to build up the fellowship through consensus. An institution sometimes needs quick and efficient decisions and the WCC rules include provisions for such cases.

3. Report of the General Secretary

3.1 General Secretary's Address

Dr Abuom moderated a hearing session. She invited the WCC general secretary, Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, to share his report.

The full text of his report is in Appendix III.

3.2 Response to the General Secretary's Report & Sharing by Members

Dr Abuom invited Archpriest Mikhail Goundiaev (Russian Orthodox Church [Moscow Patriarchate]) to open the session in prayer. Executive committee members were then invited to share key comments about the report of the general secretary, and about what is happening in their own local contexts.

Dr Abuom thanked the general secretary for his extensive report. She noted that it updates everyone in terms of what happened since the committee last met, it reflects on what both staff and other executive members have been part of, as well as potential future directions. She is delighted to see the new spirit and the new presence WCC is building within the international community and international bodies. An item for discussion is WCC's values; as we engage with the international, secular, and faith bodies, we are challenged to be clear and vocal in terms of our own spirituality and the values that underpin our work.

In response to several questions about health issues and WCC's involvement with the World Health Organization (WHO), Dr Tveit shared that the WCC and WHO had an ongoing relationship since 1976, and there are agreements that are issued every second year about what we deliver. Not all of these agreements had been followed up, partly because of too few staff dedicated to this area of work. Moving forward, we want to report what was said, and also say what we can deliver. Here, we represent together with many others, the input of the WHO. The staff team has been able to find ways to support to the challenges related to Ebola because of their professional capacities. The challenge is not having enough capacities to do it even while we have done what we can. The WHO has also given us different signals of what they would like and what they need. Now, there are regular meetings between the WCC and WHO. The challenge is for the churches in the affected countries about how to make the medical centres work, and how to have the messages about what to do and what not to do to be shared properly. The WCC will not be operating clinics; however, the WCC, its churches can be the links between them and the theological and pastoral reflection. We are also the link between them and the United Nations based deliveries.

Dr Hutabarat-Lebang noted that the general secretary's report covered a great deal of information. She shared that the presence of the WCC with member churches is important, and the accompaniment is well described here. The moderator had been in Sri Lanka with churches who are struggling in conflict situations; Dr Hutabarat-Lebang was in Thailand. These are not in the report, and it would be helpful to have a better view of such accompaniment. She noted that this is our commitment as the leadership of the WCC to take seriously journeying together with people.

She asked if we could have a list of events and meetings in the Asian context. She also shared three points. Firstly, we need to continue to pray for Pakistan. The general secretary and the WCC have expressed solidarity; it would also be good if the executive committee could do the same. Secondly, there is the celebration of the centenary in the Myanmar Council of Churches. Churches there face tremendous issues with regard to conflicts. Thirdly, there is the issue of child rights. This issue has been addressed by many churches. Since WCC wants to take this as one of its projects it would be a good idea to have a mapping of churches' involvement in this concern. Similarly, it would be helpful to have a mapping of churches who are concerned with HIV/AIDS. There are churches who have been taking issues with regard to these conflicts and problems. With such a mapping, we could see the partners are who are working on these areas. Then, we can journey together and also give more attention to churches who are not yet responding to these concerns. The topic of interreligious conflict is important as well. The question is how WCC can address it, not just as a Christian community under difficult situations in places such as Pakistan; but also exploring how we can collaborate and address these concerns together with our partners from other religions.

Bishop Opoko spoke about the Ebola crisis. He shared that it is important for the executive committee to understand what the WCC staff are doing in responding to this. Earlier this year, he had the privilege of representing the WCC general secretary at the Liberia Council of Churches. He said that he had been on the phone constantly with the people of Liberia, and they shared what the WCC has done. The actions of the WCC have reassured the people of Liberia that there are others who are identifying with their situation. There are still inadequate hospital facilities. We need to do much more than this. He also wanted to commend the ways in which Nigeria tackled the crisis and is now Ebola-free. Churches and national council of churches within the Africa region can do something. We can write them and share about the kind of support they can give. There are people in refugee camps in Liberia; they need food and other supports. The Nigeria Council of Churches has declared a week

that is about sensitizing beyond borders, with particular reference to people in Liberia to see if the church can raise funds and send funds to brothers and sisters in that place.

He also wanted to thank the WCC for their efforts on Boko Haram. The lack of education for people in the north of Nigeria is a big issue. The president of the country is trying to bring education to people in the north. For Boko Haram, this is a threat because with education they will not be able to control the people. The areas that are targeted are areas that have voted in favour of the Christian president. They are beheading people and killing people in the north. Christians and minorities are the ones who are targeted.

Dr Burley commented on the section of the general secretary's report on HIV/AIDS. First, he noted that he is reminded of the importance of the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA) and their involvement related to HIV/AIDS and food security. The International AIDS Conference recently held in Australia had a strong faith presence because of the EAA. With their limited resources, and by the grace of God, the EAA, WCC, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) were the only faith organizations at the conference. There was a meaningful interfaith pre-conference and they heard from leaders from many different faith communities. These are things that the EAA was responsible for and this should be considered as the executive discusses the future of the EAA.

He also spoke about the context of the United States. Ebola has been a big concern. The ELCA has deployed more than $100,000 of resources for Liberia including hospital resources. The church has also been very engaged in climate change, and has tackled issues around race and racism in the US context. They have been very engaged and vocal in issues in Israel and Palestine, and the conflict in Gaza. The US holds a particular position and voice about what takes place in the region and the ELCA has been successful in having a balanced response.

Bishop Dr Mary Ann Swenson (United Methodist Church), vice-moderator of the central committee, shared that the UMC is in full communion relationship with the ELCA and other partners. Many of the things that Dr Burley talked about were also issues with which her church is involved. She shared two stories. Firstly, the horrific execution by ISIS was a Methodist who had grown up in Indiana, USA. In response to this, she was asked about how to offer a Christian/Muslim funeral. She noted that our interreligious relationships matter. Secondly, one of the persons in the United States who died recently from Ebola was also a Methodist from Sierra Leone. He had been a missionary in Sierra Leone and had come and lived in the United States. She added that she had also had the opportunity to speak at Centre for the Church in Global AIDS, and the work that is being done around HIV/AIDS.

Rev. Dr Paul Gardner (Moravian Church in Jamaica) noted that there were conversations about HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean. For the church and faith community this is an opportunity for public witness. His own church developed a church school manual in which they look at the issue of human sexuality in a way that it could be taught to children in a biblical and Christ-centered way, so no parents could object in terms of how the materials were presented. They had to be careful that what was being presented was safe from the State side but also approved by the parents. In light of the high HIV rates in the Caribbean, it was a good programme. He looks forward to the engagement that will come from the WCC.

Bishop John F. White (African Methodist Episcopal Church) commended the general secretary for his report. He added another item to the agenda from an African perspective: Lesotho, in southern Africa, is going through tremendous uproar. There was a coup attempted and the government has closed its session about three weeks ago. As an American he was told to leave the country. The Lesotho Council of Churches needs help. There will be an election in February and South Africa has been asked to provide police protection and security for the country. What can the WCC do about the situation in Lesotho?

Mr Thomas Hyeono Kang (Igreja Evangélica de Confissão Luterana no Brasil) felt that this was the best report he had seen from the general secretary. He noted that there have been conflicts in Latin America, and wanted to thank the WCC for their work in the region.

Dr Quawas agreed with the general secretary about interreligious dialogue. He observed that in the report, the general secretary spoke about the importance of Israel and Jerusalem for Jews and Christians but reminded the group that tackling Islamophobia from a Christian perspective at this time is very important. He was particularly concerned about Iraq and Syria now; Libya, and Egypt in the future.

He also clarified that Christians in the Middle East are the indigenous peoples. Islam came later. Many Christians were converted. Christian and Muslims in the region speak the same language: Arabic. The other people are the Jews who do not believe in Jesus. He had the impression that WCC is trying to give them more privileges than people who are Christian. He is concerned that the current paragraph on interreligious dialogue and cooperation, namely the proposal for a paper on anti-Semitism will create difficulties. He noted that since 1948 the WCC position for anti-Semitism has been clear. If there are those who are accusing the WCC of being anti-Semitic, they need to look at the WCC's position historically. This is a divisive issue. He felt that it is not the right time for such a paper on anti-Semitism, including for humanitarian and political reasons. He also thanked the general secretary for his hard work in between executive committee.

The general secretary responded to the many questions raised. He referenced to Actions on Public Issues (Appendix IV of his report), because Pakistan is noted there. He also noted that his report does not list everything that takes place in the WCC; there is much more work that takes place within the organization. Instead, he wanted to focus on the work that he is involved in and to share some of his own reflections. It is part of his job to be transparent with the executive committee, particularly with regard to issues related to policy.

He reported that there were Jewish-Christian dialogue meetings. Archbishop Vicken Aykazian is heading up this group from the WCC side, and he will be invited to share more. The Jews do not want to have these as public meetings just yet; however, he is happy to report on those meetings. He noted that the Jews wanted to talk about what Israel meant for them. They also wanted to hear from Christians about what Jerusalem means for us. We informed the Jews about the significance for Christians, far beyond Christian Zionism. We did not discuss our policy. However, in the role of general secretary, it is important to respond to accusations from Jewish groups that the WCC has an anti-Semitic approach. In the framework of our encounter, reflecting our commitment to inter-faith relations, our Jewish partners wanted more information about how to respond to the accusations of being anti-Semitic, and the growing tendency of the Islamophobia in our own churches. We needed a more systematic reflection on this. As a consequence, the paper on "Antisemitism: Towards an Ecumenical Position" was prepared by a staff colleague. It is not meant to be a statement but rather as a discussion starter internal to the WCC. He added that in interfaith relationships, we need to raise the Christian perspective in the many challenges that we face. This is an important this conversation and discourse.

Archbishop Vicken Aykazian added that anti-Semitism and Islamophobia have been on the agenda for a while and that it is important for WCC to speak about anti-Semitism. It is our responsibility to offer certain clarification on this matter.

Metropolitan Gennadios noted that with regard to anti-Semitism, we need to be careful because all churches do not share the same convictions, and experience different relations with Jews. We must be careful about the proposed document: it should be a balanced paper. Otherwise, if churches are asked to receive it some of them will have serious difficulties to respond to it positively.

Prof. Dr Marina Kolovopoulou (Church of Greece) emphasized the sensitivity of this specific subject. She shared that the WCC has to be very careful about how it speaks about Palestinians and Christians.

Each church knows what it holds on the topic of anti-Semitism. What is written in the general secretary report comes out something different. She is concerned that WCC would move from here and act differently. An invitation to a conference is fine, but a study guide on anti-Semitism under these conditions would cause great problems in the member churches. It is a divisive issue, and could cause problems.

In reference to the *Nostra Aetate*, Dr Tveit noted that WCC has been invited to the Vatican to be part of a conversation that they are having; WCC is being invited to participate in a dialogue. It is only normal that WCC should participate.

Metropolitan Nifon asked if WCC has done enough to defend Christians in other parts of the world. He has also heard people speak about Christiano-phobia. There are certain parts of the world where Christians are regarded as being dangerous people. We need to ask ourselves about how we can be more active in defending Christians in some parts of the world.

Dr Elias El-Halabi (Middle East Council of Churches) suggested expanding what is written in the general secretary's report about the importance of Jerusalem for Christians. It would be better to say that Jerusalem is an important place for Jews, Muslims, and Christians, and to engage in dialogue about this. This would be more up-to-date and current. He noted that the root cause for all religious extremism is the perpetual injustice in Palestine. Until this is healed, there will be no end to Islamic extremism.

Rev. Dr Hyun Ju Bae (Presbyterian Church of Korea) thanked the general secretary for his work and the continued follow-up on the pilgrimage of justice and peace in the Korean peninsula. She noted that in Korea, there is Christiano-phobia, because people are reacting against the violence in Abrahamic religions. Some people are going back to Buddhism and other faiths. The violence in the Middle East is affecting Christian evangelism. She also noted as a biblical scholar she felt it important to invite not only the traditional voices, but also voices from the margins such as Palestinian theological liberation perspectives; we need all different perspectives. They can play a role in our encounters with the Jews and Islam in the Bible.

Archpriest Mikhail Goundiaev offered his thanks to the general secretary for his report, and especially his mentioning of the Ukraine problem. He noted that this is pre-occupying his church now. He shared that there have been good conversations in Moscow. He observed that the information that we are receiving from the mass media is not information, but is rather propaganda. The WCC can play an important role engaging churches in the direct sharing of information and in dialogue. He remembered the time during the Cold War when people did not have access to information and he is concerned that the same thing is happening now. It will be important for the WCC not to lose this opportunity to be an instrument of peace-keeping.

Bishop Simo Peura (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland) noted that, in reference to the visit with Patriarch Kirill that was outlined in the report of the general secretary, people are worried about what is going on, and that there are negative reactions against Russian policy. On both sides there are difficulties in understanding each other and he insisted that keeping lines of communication open is important. He asked for more details about the purpose of the visit.

The general secretary responded that at this time WCC should build bridges between east and west, as it was necessary to do some decades ago. However, as WCC we can work in different ways, for example, send a delegation with representation from different churches to listen to different voices from Ukraine. This is one of the purposes of the visit. It is important to listen to people first-hand about how they experience the situation and the challenges within the Ukraine. Listening to church voices will give perspectives. A well-prepared visit will give access to many voices. There is a real security situation in the east, so where exactly the delegation will go is still to be decided. There may also be a small consultation after that visit. The situation in Ukraine needs to have a political solution, not a military one, and inasmuch as possible WCC needs to nurture such a development.

Archbishop Vicken Aykazian also thanked the general secretary for his excellent report. He asked if the general secretary could give some more information about his last visit to the United States and his meeting with UNICEF and other governmental agencies.

Ms Martina Victoria Kopecká (Czechoslovak Hussite Church) appreciated WCC's cooperation with UNICEF. She shared that the rights of children is also an important dimension of WCC work. The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace demands a lot, and requires us to use all of our abilities. She thanked the general secretary for the range of topics noted in his report. Her own church is going to commemorate the 600th anniversary of a martyr next year. Martyrs and their work are connected to justice and peace; this is very important in her own local context.

Dr Abuom thanked everyone for journeying with her during the loss of her husband. Everyone's prayers and support were appreciated. She then shared that WCC's response to various country situations should be carefully considered. There are similar situations to Eritrea in Africa, Asia, and other places. The information coming out from Eritrea is that churches (Catholic and Orthodox) are experiencing serious persecution. WCC engagement could not continue because of the political repression in that country. Related to this is the issue of human trafficking as the repression of people in the region. People are dying in the Sinai desert and the Red Sea as undocumented people. Human trafficking and forced migration are huge issues in the region. In Morocco, the AACC staff found 200 people ready to cross over to Europe. WCC needs to think about these issues.

From her experience at the centenary celebrations of the Christian Conference of Asia, going beyond the conflicts is also important. Healing from trauma and psycho-social support is critical. This came out strongly in the Sri Lanka situation. They are pleading for healing and there are very few people who are trained in this area and can offer services.

She added that many people have been killed in northern Kenya because of extremists; people are dying daily. In a recent incident, all of the people who were killed were Christians because they could not recite the Koran. The issue of Islamophobia and interreligious dialogue is a big one; Christian extremism is now emerging as a response.

Dr Abuom reminded the group that many states will not achieve the millennium development goals (MDGs). As churches (nationally, regionally, globally), we are challenged to look at global development. She shared that her own country, Kenya, had been moved to a middle-income country; however, there are many people still living well below the poverty line. There are extremes between rich and poor. The statistical measurements are important. There is increasing marginalization and exclusion of people. In response, the general secretary noted that we are already involved in the discussion about the 2015 MDGs through different parts of the work, and would ensure that the values that we want to address would be at the heart of many of these conversations over the next few years.

The moderator added the issue of sexual and gender-based violence which is growing in every sense. In Africa, men are growing and there is a concept of positive masculinity; but, sexual and gender-based violence is still on the increase. Church leaders have left this issue to gender activists and have not internalized it in our own structures. She noted that the AU and the AACC met a few weeks ago with other religious communities. For the first time the AU asked faith communities to offer ideas about the vision of the African continent in the future. For the first time, they are engaging the religious communities. Are the church leaders equipped to engage?

Dr Tveit hoped that discussions in the sub-committees both on the reference groups on human sexuality and on the pilgrimage of justice and peace, would explore how these two working groups can address the issues of gender-based violence and migration. When he had met with the working group on human sexuality, he encouraged them to look at this from a very wide scope.

Bishop Bosse-Huber shared that Bishop Heinirich Bedford-Strohm was recently elected as the new chairperson of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD). He was one of the moderators at the WCC assembly in Busan.

Thanks were offered to everyone for their comments.

4. Greetings, Discussions and Exposure Visits

4.1 Greetings by Government

Dr Agnes Abuom moderated a general session. The general secretary welcomed the Mayor of Sotira, Mr George Takkas, and the Chief of Police in the Ammochostos District, Mr Antonis Papakostantis. Dr Tveit expressed his thanks to them for welcoming the executive committee to Cyprus.

The Mayor of Sotira welcomed the committee to the region. He noted that this was the first time that the executive committee was meeting in this part of Cyprus, and he was glad that the meeting was taking place in their town. He wished everyone the best, and hoped that, after their exposure visits, the executive committee would better understand the suffering that has been taking place here for the past forty years.

4.2 Greetings from Church Leaders

On 22 November, the executive committee had dinner together with the leadership of the Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy.

On 23 November, the executive committee was hosted by Metropolitan Vasilios and the leadership of the different confessional families in Cyprus. Dr Abuom noted that this was a time for sharing with one another, and invited Metropolitan Gennadios to address the guests. Metropolitan Gennadios expressed joy at receiving the representatives from the different churches. The executive committee was privileged to listen to them and to the histories of their own communities. In Cyprus, despite the division and the occupation, local churches have a harmonious daily life and experience good fellowship together. They consider it to be one country with one nation.

The general secretary also welcomed the church leaders and shared that this was a good opportunity to meet with local churches. He was happy that the committee were hosted by the Church of Cyprus. The executive committee is in charge of a significant work among the churches in the world; it tries to plan and monitor how to move this work forward. He said that the committee was eager to hear from their context and invited the leaders to introduce themselves and to share about their communities.

His Eminence Archbishop of the Maronite Church in Cyprus, Youssef Soueif, introduced himself. He had recently moved to the island of Cyprus, and feels at home. One of the basic characteristics of the island was to welcome people. He continues to hope for peace and reconciliation. The Maronite Church, an Eastern rite Catholic Church, belongs to the tradition and spirituality of Antioch and uses Aramaic in the liturgy. Maronites have existed in Cyprus for more than 1,200 years. There have been challenges in history and today there is the challenge of the division of the island where there is an occupied territory. As Cypriot church leaders, they are trying to promote reconciliation and to play a crucial role in peace building.

The archbishop shared that spiritual leaders are participating in a dialogue of life; they hope that they will reach a fair and just solution. They are convinced of the role Cyprus can play as a model of how religions could live together and create a space for understanding one another. They are insisting on freedom of conscience and are trying to find solutions. He noted that his church had communities in

four villages in the north. He has free access only to two of them. Two hours for mass are allowed in one village, in another only one mass is allowed every year. He believes that the more possibilities they are given by the Turkish Cypriot authorities, the more people will understand their efforts for reconciliation. The overall message is that they want to live together and re-discover the spirit of coexistence in the island. He concluded observing that Cyprus could play both a geo-political and a geo-ecclesiastical role between Europe and the Middle East.

Father George Ioannou, Dean of the Parishes in Sotira, introduced himself. He shared that he is originally from Poland, and he represents the Latin rite community of the Catholic Church on the island. He arrived last October and is a Franciscan father. He noted that St Francis was a man of dialogue and a man of reconciliation. St Francis approached Cyprus in his way and wrote to Egypt and the holy land in 1219. From experiences of St Francis, we are always challenged to give and work on reconciliation. Father George Ioannou lives in the Vatican embassy located in the green buffer zone between the Republic of Cyprus and the occupied north. He hoped that the wall dividing Cyprus will come down. He noted that his service in Cyprus is mostly relating to foreign migrants.

Rev. Canon Paul Maybury shared that he represents the Anglican Church on behalf of the Rt. Rev. Michael Lewis, Bishop in Cyprus and the Gulf. There are six Anglican parishes on the island, most of which have been around for over 100 years. The priests of the Anglican Church are both men and women and come from the UK, South Africa, and until recently, from Korea. A lay chaplain from Hong Kong works with Nigerians. The Anglican Diocese covers Cyprus and the Gulf. In Qatar, there are eight migrant workers for every Qatari. The Christian presence there is massive; 25% of the population in Qatar are in worship every Friday. The Anglican Centre in Doha hosts 66 congregations. In response to a question He said that there are many Nigerians in Famagusta because a European education is offered for a low price. The majority of Nigerian students come for three to four years, and they cannot afford to go home in between. They seek work on the holidays to continue to fund their work on the university. Because of the division on the island at the moment, anyone who arrives in the northern part of the country is not permitted to travel to the south. The students in the north never see Cyprus; they only see the north. Once a term, all of the Nigerian congregations gather together on the island. There are 800 Nigerians who gather for worship. In addition there are also two Anglican Turkish-speaking congregations, most of whom are converts and tend to come in the back door rather than the front door to attend. Metropolitan Gennadios added that the Bible society provides Bibles in Turkish for Turkish-speaking congregations.

Rev. Björn Rydberg, from the Church of Sweden Abroad, introduced himself and shared that that he has now been in Cyprus for six years. He felt very welcomed to the island. The number of congregants is currently high because it is full of retired people. There are also many young people from the northern countries who come here. There are volunteers who take care of the young people. Last year, they met 39,000 people who came on holiday in a period of eight weeks. During holiday season, the church, which is in the central district, provides young people with a place where no alcohol is served. For these young people, the church is a place of security and gives them a sense of home, where they feel safe and can get some help. They care for them and listen to them; they provide help for them. The young vacationers know that this is the church for them.

Metropolitan Vasilios shared that in the touristic areas in the region they face problems with young people coming for holidays. This is not only a problem for the young people but also for the Orthodox living here. There are problems with alcohol and drugs. Families are going to the church and asking for help. He also noted that there are children from foreign families living in the area. Generally, there are a big percentage of children from foreign countries attending the state school.

Rev. Björn Rydberg continued by saying that about 70% of Swedish citizens belong to the Lutheran church, and they have responsibility to take care of Nordic people even in other places in the world. He has been in Spain and Greece, and in both places they have had close contact with the Catholic, Anglican, and Orthodox churches. He noted that it has been a privilege to be a priest in such situations.

Dr Abuom thanked the leaders for their presentations and invited Metropolitan Vasilios to share a few words.

Metropolitan Vasilios noted that three religious communities (Latin, Maronite, and the Armenian) are recognized officially by the constitution of the state and they have their own representatives to the parliament. This is the legal status of these historical communities. He noted that they are happy with the collaboration of all communities in Cyprus. The effort by leaders in relation to the northern part of the country is based on this spirit of collaboration. Metropolitan Vasilios added that all Christian communities are members of the board of the Bible society of Cyprus, and this provides another opportunity to be together.

Archbishop Youssef noted that he would like to mention that in Cyprus, the dialogue of churches is not around the table, it is in the real daily life. He remembered when he first came to Cyprus in 2008-2009, an Orthodox Metropolitan whose diocese was in the north visited the occupied area once a year. The Metropolitan knew about his presence in the island and invited him to a liturgical service in his cathedral that was in the occupied zone. It was a big sign. One cannot describe the beautiful and emotional reaction of the faithful who were seeing two bishops together: Orthodox and Catholic praying together. During the week of prayer for Christian unity, they are trying to live into this in a deep way. It is a dialogue of life. The pope experienced this kind of brotherhood when he came.

He appealed to the WCC to seriously consider the presence of Christians in the Middle East. The presence is not for the Christians; it helps and will continue to help the other religions to be more peaceful and to be in more of a brotherhood.

Mr Peter Prove, director of the Churches' Commission on International Affairs (CCIA), asked if it would be possible to hear more about the religious leaders engaging together in searching for a solution to the division in Cyprus and in informing the inter-governmental negotiations.

The archbishop shared that in his experiences since 2012, it started with the meeting between two church leaders in Cyprus. The official talks are under the umbrella of the United Nations (UN). Under the leadership of the UN, religious leaders were not discussing political issues but religious issues in a concrete way. They provide an example to the political leaders. He gave a personal example: last May, he was in the north where they have a Maronite church. During the service, the police came and stopped him. The reaction of the Turkish community was to criticize what happened. The government took a position. They called him to say that it was a misunderstanding. He concluded that this happened because the church is well respected by the society, and saw that such an action was wrong. The reaction of the people against what happened to him was a fruit of the interreligious dialogue.

Dr Abuom shared that these were very encouraging words. She asked what some of the stumbling blocks are and some of the challenges faced in his work, and to the process of restoring peace.

Archbishop Youssef shared that a challenge is the youth. The tragic event of division took place 40 years ago and the young people on both sides do not know each other. He wanted to create a basketball team among communities. He also wanted to create a choir among various churches and denominations. People need to know how to live together. People want solutions. It is essential to connect with the new generation. There are many committees working together; the best one is for the cultural heritage. He noted that small initiatives are very important.

The general secretary offered some concluding words. He shared that it was good to hear about the work of the church with young people. There are new perspectives and new dimensions of what it means to be on a pilgrimage of justice and peace. This is a place where people have come and where people continue to come. In many difficult times, the church brings the witness of the God of Life, God of Love, and God of Justice and Peace. He noted that in what we have seen and experienced throughout the day, the church has a key role in being here for people on the move with new

aspirations for justice and peace. He also stated that to be together is not only a method or plan, but it is also a gift. The way in which they are sharing what it means to be together is a way of being church. It is a joy to be part of the togetherness. Thanks were expressed to all of them.

Dr Abuom also offered her thanks and appreciation. She assured that WCC takes seriously the role of Christians in the Middle East and it is important for us to hear about how we can accompany them in the Middle East.

Metropolitan Vasilios closed this portion of the meeting with prayer.

On 25 November, the leadership of the executive committee, accompanied by the CCIA director and the communication officer, were received by H.E. Nicos Anastasiades, President of the Republic of Cyprus.

On that same day, the executive committee was hosted for lunch by His Beatitude Chrysostomos II, Archbishop of Cyprus. The archbishop offered the committee a warm welcome to Cyprus, and wished the executive well. He noted that though the Church of Cyprus is small in numbers, however, they do their best to witness within the World Council of Churches.

He shared that, following the occupation of the northern part of the island, there has been almost half a century of dialogue, but the problem has not yet been solved. He noted that they are starting to give up on the idea of a unified country, and are moving instead towards the idea of having a federation so that they can formally move together. He shared that even as they would like to work towards a federation, some are still insisting on having two states. The idea of having two states will have tragic consequences: people may never accept two countries on one island. As a church, they make it clear to ambassadors that they are ready to accept the federation and would like to work towards a solution; however, they will never accept the division of the island.

His Beatitude noted that while some people say that the problem of the division is religion, and a clash between Christians and Muslims, he is deeply convinced that the problem of the division is not religious, and it never has been.

He shared that he would like to have the possibility of restoring churches in the north, and return them to places of worship; he noted that so far this has been rare, and has only happened in a few cases. He shared that he has a living memory of Christians and Muslims living together as sisters and brothers on the same island before the division. He believes that people dream of days when they can live together in peace and share in joy.

Dr Agnes Abuom expressed her deep gratitude to the Church of Cyprus, and to Metropolitan Vasilios. She noted that the coming of the executive committee to Cyprus was an eye-opener on many issues. She shared that in a context of division and conflict we need to keep preaching peace, reconciliation, love, and justice. She observed that the Church of Cyprus has contributed a great deal to the ecumenical movement and they are a beacon of justice and peace. She shared that she had seen Christian and religious leaders commit to a dialogue of life and build on the dream of a united Cyprus. She reflected that when she met with the president of Cyprus (with the rest of the leadership of the central committee) that the president also expressed his desire for unification. She noted that we live prayerfully and in hope that there will be a united Cyprus. She thanked the church for their hospitality. Dr Tveit also offered his thanks and appreciation to Archbishop Chrysostomos and to the Church of Cyprus.

4.3 Brief History of Cyprus

Metropolitan Vasilios gave a brief historical overview of Cyprus. The Church of Cyprus is rooted to the very beginnings of Christianity. In the book of Acts of the Apostles, the first visit of Paul and

Barnabas was to Cyprus. There, they established the first church. This tradition is very strong in the country, particularly as Barnabas was born in Cyprus from a Jewish family. After the first visit with Paul, Barnabas came alone with Mark the evangelist.

The Church of Cyprus has a long and troubled history, like the troubled history of the whole country. During the Byzantine period there were the Arab invasions which destroyed nearly everything.
The city of Constantia was destroyed during the 7th century during the invasion of the Arabs. Famagusta was the name given to Ammochostos by the Latins when Cyprus was conquered by the crusaders in the 12th century. Crusaders created the kingdom of Jerusalem, Armenia, and Cyprus. After two succeeding decisions in 1240 and 1242, they limited the Orthodox bishops from fifteen to only four. They submitted the Orthodox bishops to the Latin hierarchy.

In 1571, there was a new phase of history: the Ottoman period. After that time, there was the British colonization from the 1800s to 1960. In 1960, there was independence, and the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus. The Turkish invasion of Cyprus was in 1974, and there has been 40 years of occupation in the north. He referred to the divided situation in the Korean peninsula, which they had all experienced at the Busan assembly.

He shared that in 2007 with a decision of the Synod of the Church of Cyprus, they re-established the old bishoprics. As a consequence this Diocese of Ammochostos came again into being, the diocesan center where the meeting is being held was built and the church came closer to her people living in this area.

Dr Abuom thanked Metropolitan Vasilios for this rich and complex history.

4.4 Discussion on Cyprus and the Middle East

4.4.1 Presentation on the Middle East

The moderator of the central committee invited Dr Elias El-Halabi, from the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), to share about Cyprus and the Middle East.

Dr El-Halabi shared that with the support of the WCC general secretary, the MECC is able to resolve the last bit of its financial problems. The Council has been restructured, and they are able to deal with almost 90% of the remaining debt, which was crippling the MECC. The partners have resumed their core funding. During that period, the MECC was fully supported by the member churches. For some years, no money was paid to the MECC by partners. For the core budget of the general secretariat, this was the first year that the partner funding resumed. The general secretary wrote a strong letter to all church organizations and agencies, letting them know that MECC has done what was required, and that everything is back on track. The remaining debt is small and will not undermine the working of the MECC. There is an ongoing cooperation between MECC and WCC. They have now regained their membership in ACT Alliance.

Regarding the Syria crisis, MECC is helping internally displaced people and this work amounted to almost USD 2.8 million. Part of what MECC is doing is through the programme on inter-church development and relief. They are providing psycho-social support for women and children, and focus on areas where there are Christian refugees.

MECC is in constant consultation with churches and church leaders regarding Christian presence in the Middle East. The focus on MECC should be related to Christian presence, in collaboration with Muslims. Many issues that Christians are facing in the Middle East are shared concerns. Because Christians are small in number, and are the most vulnerable, there is a lot of work to be done bilaterally between the churches and with the Muslims of good faith who share the same perspectives and attitudes of what is going on.

Dr El-Halabi shared that over the past few years, there have been changes in leadership. There are new patriarchs and new Orthodox priests. These new leaders have good cooperation. The MECC is planning a meeting of all the churches in the Middle East that will take place in January 2015.

He added a word of gratitude to the Archbishop of Cyprus. The MECC general assembly was hosted by Cyprus, and thanks were extended to Cyprus for their accompaniment during the time of healing and restructuring of the MECC.

Metropolitan Gennadios thanked him for his presentation. He asked if it would be possible to inform the group about what the priorities of MECC are regarding the crisis in the Middle East. Dr El-Halabi shared that the main concern of the MECC is the concern of all of the churches: how to sustain and maintain the Christian presence in the Middle East. They have learned from the crisis in Iraq that the Christian presence is very vulnerable. The concern is that internally displaced people in Lebanon and Jordan are served and protected in order to keep them in the region. A struggle that all churches and agencies are facing is that when people leave their country and regions, they do not return.

In terms of the refugee situation, he added that people should not stay in tents; they require a minimum of decent conditions to live. This is not an emergent crisis but rather an extended crisis. It is entering four years. People have needs beyond blankets. They have needs related to health care and education and these are not covered under humanitarian aid. Many NGOs cannot help with education or medical care. If these are not provided, then Christian families are tempted to leave the country. When they leave, it will not be temporary; they will not come back. The MECC wants to focus on the needs of the Christian community, and also to keep them within the neighbouring countries, so that when the situation is normalized, then they will come back.

Dr El-Halabi shared that Christians and church leaders have also played a role in trying to get back people who have been kidnapped in the region. A great deal of weight is put on the shoulders of churches; they are paying with blood and with the minimum resources that they have. Many churches have depleted the resources that they have; they are dependent on the grace of God.

4.4.2 PRESENTATION ON CYPRUS

Dr Abuom invited Metropolitan Vasilios to make a presentation on Cyprus, and to deepen his earlier presentation on the brief history of Cyprus.

Metropolitan Vasilios shared that Cyprus was colonized by Britain and that there was a struggle against colonization from 1955-1959. It was then agreed to establish an independent the Republic of Cyprus in 1960. There were three guarantor countries: Britain, Greece, and Turkey.

There are various ethnic communities in Cyprus: Greek and Muslim as well as small historical communities (e.g. Armenian, Maronite, Latin). The constitution gave rights to these communities. At that time, the percentage of the population was 80% Greek, 18% Muslim, and 2% shared by the other communities. The constitution gave the right of participation of the Muslim community to 30% in the institutions of the state, including police services. The parliament also was composed in that way. At that time, there was no question of territory, because Muslims, Greeks, and others were spread all over the island. Unfortunately, the right of veto given to the vice-president, who was Turkish Cypriot, created a difficult situation, blocking every decision of the state. When the parliament voted for the budget, there was a veto from the Turkish Cypriot side, and everything was blocked. There were thirteen points proposed to change the constitution. The Turkish community left the parliament and government, and created separate blocks.

No one was able to enter those areas. This was in 1963. The functioning of the state had lasted only three years, and the Turkish Cypriot community refused to come back as was provided by the constitution.

Then, in 1974, officers from Greece tried to oust the president of Cyprus. Turkey used its rights as a guarantor country, invaded Cyprus, and said that they were coming to re-establish the constitutional situation in Cyprus and protect the Turkish community. This was the legal explanation for the Turkish invasion of 1974.

There were many negotiations, and recently there were two agreements between the leaders of both communities. They gave the framework for a solution. This frame was, for our side, politically valid. The government is trying to find a solution. There was a territorial question in that after the invasion, all of the Turks who lived everywhere in Cyprus were displaced to the other side; the Greek population too was forced to come to the south. The territorial question was already there. They were agreements for zonal and communal solutions. At the same time, even if Turkey agrees during the negotiations, they are acting in differently. They have thus created a state in the occupied area, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, recognized only by Turkey. Last year, there was a big effort by both sides with the help of the United Nations. If you hear the statement from the Turkish side, they insist they have an independent country in the northern part of the island. Turkey does not recognize the Republic of Cyprus (southern side); they only have a bilateral agreement with the Northern Cyprus Republic. They claim all rights to come to the economic zone in the north; now, they claim rights also in the southern side of Cyprus. This is creating much insecurity in the psychology of the people of Cyprus.

There are 550 and more churches, chapels, and monuments under destruction. A small booklet was recently published by the Diocese of Constantia with an exhibition of photos so that people could see what the churches are like there. There is also the human side as many people were killed during the Turkish invasion and many were declared missing. Till today, people do not know what happened to their relatives. Of course, for many years there was no possibility for visiting the other side. Now, there are check-points that people can cross and go to visit.

The general secretary was invited to share additional words about Cyprus. He wanted to express that being here in Cyprus is meaningful; Cyprus is a biblical land that is part of our joint Christian history. It is important to note what we have in common. We have come at a crucial time for this country. He also expressed his gratitude for being here to His Beatitude Archbishop Chrysostomos II. He stated that the executive committee was here to show solidarity with the church and the people and to learn about the context. In addition, this meeting, and the next executive committee meeting are both being hosted by Orthodox churches and WCC is invited to listen to these special contexts.

4.4.3 RESPONSES ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST AND CYPRUS

Dr Abuom invited people to share their responses and comments about the presentations that they have heard.

Archbishop Vicken Aykazian explained that it is very difficult for Christians in the Middle East. No one knows what will happen next. There is no one in power right now who feels that they have the solutions to the problem. Christians in the Middle East are being used by powers we do not know. There are visits to western countries and Washington DC. A trip for church leaders from the Middle East was organized recently and the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches were unaware of the trip and expressed concern. Christians in the Middle East should be careful and, when receiving an invitation, need to think twice.

Dr Audeh Quawas shared that the visit mentioned did not represent the whole Middle East. Very often western Christian political positions, which are against the positions of the Middle East region, are

imposed on Christians of the regions who are paying the bad debts of brothers and sisters from the west. For example, there are not problems with the Jewish religion but the main problem is political. The west puts on the table the issue of anti-Semitism, however, the Arabs consider themselves as Semitic. It is the duty of the fellowship to clarify this issue. All political situations need to be considered deeply, and WCC programmes that will help to strengthen the Christian presence in the region should be strongly affirmed. The programme sub-committee will need to think deeply about this issue, and encourage the WCC to cooperate with the Middle East Council of Churches.

Metropolitan Gennadios asked if the WCC has a clear policy on the Middle East, not only limited to visits and statements. He noted that Istanbul is full of Syrians, living in terrible conditions. The Turkish government realized that they have opened up the doors more than what was expected, and now they have to deal with concrete human needs.

The general secretary noted that our reflections on Cyprus and the Middle East should be continued throughout the meeting and this will be worked on other sessions, including the programme sub-committee. He agreed that we should discuss particularly how we will address the questions that are coming from everywhere to the WCC – what is being done to address Iraq and Syria, in addition to Israel and Palestine

There are several related questions: can an interreligious dialogue be facilitated around the situation. What is WCC doing for the Christians? How is WCC dealing with the humanitarian crisis? How is this helping Christians? We will need to continue reflections on these issues. A key question is about refugees and internally displaced peoples. We will also need to continue reflecting on what our strategy is and will be on this particular situation.

He also noted that his report (see Appendix III) includes information about Israel and Palestine; he wonders if there should be a visit to Israel and Palestine in March. But, overall, we should further reflect on ACT Alliance, and the WCC needs to be among those who reflect on the coordination.

Dr Hutabarat-Lebang was glad to know about the new developments in the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) and to hear about collaboration. She noted that we might need to do more homework on how the document on Christian witness is being used in local contexts. She asked how we perceive our relationship with other churches and with people of other faiths. The issue of Sunni scholars is very good. This is one of the issues that we can tackle together.

Dr El-Halabi noted that heads of churches are under constant pressure from people. As soon as they visit refugees, the question is what are you doing? Christians in the region have been double-crossed. People in the west have crossed over them to reach the Muslims, and Muslims have crossed over them to reach to the west. He shared that western agencies have been strengthening influence through the expansion of church-based agencies. Whenever something wrong happens with the Muslims in the west (for example, the burning of the Qur'an), Christians of the Middle East have to pay the price. In many of the western countries, they discovered in a later stage that there are Christians in this part of the world. Western countries have a moral responsibility to people who have been displaced and whose lives have been damaged. If we are to help the Christians in the Middle East, the advocacy and statements are important, but a change of mind is also needed on how we try to assist. We need to find ways to help families live on the ground. If Christians cannot maintain a decent life, they will leave. If we do not have a change in how we help people stay, the result will have a direct impact on all of the communities in Europe.

Dr Abuom noted the complexity, challenge, and pain of this context. She offered thanks for the sharing, and invited the executive committee to reflect on what was heard, and on how to bring hope, through a moment of silence.

Bishop Mary Anne Swenson closed the session with prayer.

4.5 VISIT OF THE UNITED NATIONS' SPECIAL ENVOY TO CYPRUS

Bishop Swenson moderated a general session. She invited Dr Hyun Ju Bae to open the session with prayer.

Bishop Swenson welcomed the United Nations' Special Envoy to Cyprus, Mr Espen Barth Eide to the meeting. He was appointed by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in August 2014 to serve as his Special Adviser on Cyprus. Mr Eide assists the parties in the conduct of full-fledged negotiations aimed at reaching a comprehensive settlement. Before his work with the United Nations, Mr Eide was Managing Director and Member of the Managing Board of the World Economic Forum in Geneva. Before that he had worked in the Norwegian government as the Minister of Foreign Affairs (2012-2013), the Minister of Defense (2011-2012), the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (2000-2001 and 2010-2011), and the Deputy Minister of Defense (2005-2010).

The executive committee members introduced themselves. Dr Tveit shared that it was an honour and joy to welcome the UN Special Envoy to the meeting. He noted that the WCC is engaged in a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, and about moving with churches into peace processes

Mr Eide shared that he was honoured to take on the job, and he is the 25th person to work in this position in 50 years (the UN Mission in Cyprus is 50 years old). He is an optimist and hopes that he will be the last person to hold this position because reconciliation will take place. He feels that it is unlikely that the situation will stay the same; instead, it will either get much worse, or much better. He noted that the entire region is currently in turmoil, including nearby places such as Syria. He feels that it is important to now look for a future-oriented way for the Cyprus problem.

He shared that he was sent here from the secretary-general of the UN, and he was warmly supported by the entire Security Council. He noted the efforts for solving the Cyprus problem in 2004. They were very much focused on solving the internal issue, and the moving forward together. Unfortunately, this failed; there was not a sufficient degree of buy-in from people on the island. The situation was stagnant for a while, and then other initiatives came in.

On 11 February 2014, the two current leaders signed a joint declaration which spells out where the two communities want to go – a bi-communal, bi-zonal entity, consisting of two federal states, living together under one roof of Cyprus. In the spring and summer not much happened. Then, there was an idea that this was the time to move. When he first came here in the early days of September, Mr Eide felt that they could start the final leg. The two leaders were able to say publicly that we are now going into the final phase of negotiations where we will no longer present our positions but instead will be moving together.

Mr Eide said that his mandate is to help the two sides to solve their problem as they have expressed their desire to do. His mandate is not to mediate, but instead to facilitate a process between the two parties. He is looking at everything that the two sides have presented on topics of territory, property, and governance; both sides know their own and the opposite side very well. He is trying to share the areas on which people are close, and the hard agreements which can be solved through a final win-win phase, where the two sides will trade one issue for another.

The UN Special Envoy shared that his mandate should be the easiest of all special envoys. He noted that on a daily basis many others experience killings and atrocities; when there is fresh blood, there are fresh animosities and a new desire for revenge. Some other UN special envoys have difficulty identifying who the key parties are. When you think you have identified them, there are more parties and they split or new factions develop. Further, the sides do not know what they disagree about. Therefore, it is a challenge to define what it is all about. In this context, there are old atrocities and old grievances but no fresh blood. There are also only two sides and they are consistent. They have clear leaders and they can discuss and they can communicate. They know what they want (a bi-

communal and bi-zonal area). The static situation here in Cyprus means that some people think that a solution would be nice if it is identical to what they have. Some people just want the status quo. In other contexts, where people are dying, there is more urgency about doing something about it. The peaceful characteristic of the island is a blessing, but it is also a challenge in figuring out what to do about it.

Mr Eide observed that status quo may not be as stable as people think because the region is in massive turmoil. What we are seeing in the immediate vicinity is an extreme form. For some countries in the region, there is not only changing leadership but also systems are collapsing after 100 years. He noted that these states are seriously threatened.

There is now a crisis in hydro-carbons (oil and gas) which may be seen as either a blessing or a curse. Resource-rich countries can often be ones where there is a great deal of conflict. Mr Eide noted that they should be looking at a speedy solution so that they have a political framework to talk about this together. On this issue, some trust has broken down and there are two completely different expectations.

The Turkish Cypriot version is that hydro-carbons belong to the whole island, and so everyone on the island is the true owner of these resources. If these belong to everyone, they are concerned that the Greek Cypriots are beginning exploration and eventual production of resources before they are unified. They are therefore not part of the decisions that are being made now. Many issues need to be discussed early, long before the revenues come. They are asking the Greek Cypriots to either include them in the conversation, or to wait until they actually are together.

The Greek Cypriot version is that the Republic of Cyprus is legitimately constituted. They can claim their resources as a state, and this has a legal argument. They have access to an economic zone, including fishing and drilling for oil.

There are thus two sides who are arguing along different lines. They both think that they are right. If the point is what is legal, then the Greeks are right. If the point is a longer term political future, then the Turks are right. Each has a different starting point. Now both sides are even more certain that they agree about the future, and that the extraction of hydro-carbons is a federal issue. But, there is such a lack of trust over the present and such strong sensitivities on both sides that, when a conflict comes up in a place where there are long conflicts, then all of the historic conflicts are brought to the fore. It is not the nature of the issue; it is the context of disagreement and lack of trust. The challenge is to find things that they can agree upon. The two sides should put wise people together, in a separate track as a reflection group, who would think on behalf of the two communities about what they have to deal with.

Mr Eide noted that this is a solvable problem. Both sides would like reunification, and neither side wants to escalate this into something that is more dramatic. He would like them to look less into the past, and more into the future. He would like this island to be an example of a place that can solve their own problems, and also to show other places that this is possible.

He agreed that the religious track is important. They recently had a lunch with religious leaders from both sides. They stated that there is no religious argument against reunification.

He was thanked for his presentation, and questions and comments were invited from the executive committee.

Archbishop Vicken was happy to see an optimist in this important position. When he saw the destruction of many churches in the occupied northern part of Cyprus, he was reminded of 2,600 churches and monasteries destroyed during the Armenian Genocide. He asked about the role of Turkey. He noted that if the Turkish settlers did not come, perhaps the situation could be different. Bishop Simo Peura also asked about the role of Turkey. Metropolitan Gennadios observed that the

negotiations are not only between two parties since there are three: Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots, and Turkey.

Mr Eide thanked everyone for their questions. He noted that there is a fine line between mediation and facilitation. Yet, there are differences. He has been involved in many different kinds of peace talks (in Colombia, Philippines, and Myanmar). There are some places which would not like to have an external third party. There are other places that need a third party because the neutral person can help the conversation. The mediator would put proposals on the table. A facilitator encourages the parties to bring proposals, and helps to bridge the proposals.

In terms of Turkey, Mr Eide noted that the country has a significant role. The current arrangement around Cyprus still has an international agreement based on the three guarantor states. Some people would say that the three guarantors see their roles differently. He has close contacts with Turkey at the highest level. He also talks with Greece. Both Greece and Turkey strongly support his role, and there is a genuine will for the conflict be solved.

Dr Quawas offered this thanks for the presentation. However, he was disappointed not to hear anything about people on the ground. He underlined that Mr Eide did not talk about the 200,000 Turkish settlers since occupation. He also wondered about the UN resolutions and would like to see the UN have a much stronger position. He expressed his agony that his country (Palestine) and Cyprus are the only two countries still remaining under occupation.

Mr Eide shared that he had also been involved in Israel-Palestine. He has tried from the Norwegian side to work towards a solution. He informed the group that there is a long list of UN resolutions related to Cyprus. Here, they are trying to implement them. The fighting stopped because of the UN resolutions. The problem is that there is more history than a small island can consume. There are grievances on both sides as in any violent conflict, there are atrocities committed on both sides. He shared that there is a stated objective and agreement that they want to reunify. It is the opposite of a two-state solution in Israel-Palestine. In Cyprus, it is about two parties coming together.

Rev. Baoping Kan (China Christian Council) shared that no one wants to offend Turkey; however, the victims are here on the island. It is not a just peace here. Mr Eide agreed that it was not all that simple. It is much more complex than simply saying that there was an invasion. There were many bad things that happened on both sides. He stated that he is not here to defend any side. He shared that the Turkish argument is that in 1961, there was a unified state. This was gradually taken over by the Greek Cypriots. Then, the events happened that led to the establishment of the northern side.

Metropolitan Vasilios offered his agreement that the actual situation could be an easier one than ten years ago, given the fact that there is a new situation in which Cyprus is member of the European Union. Turkey signed a protocol for the beginning of the negotiations. He noted that there are feelings of insecurity among Greek peoples.

Mr Kang shared that he can feel the pain in this region as it parallels to his own Korean background. He wondered if it is possible that the WCC can do more harm than good, depending on what we say. Mr Prove shared his thanks for the religious track, and also asked for further reflection on the role of the religious leaders and how that influences the quality of the discussion.

Mr Eide confirmed that there was a strong appeal for the *do no harm* argument. He said that the religious track is important. They have a shared will to talk together and be together. Anything that can support the religious track will be helpful. He also suggested that there be some sort of appeal to build on the vision for a unified future and shared humanity.

Bishop Opoko noted that his prayers will be with him and with this process.

H.E. Archbishop Dr Nareg Alemezian (Armenian Apostolic Church [Holy See of Cilicia]) agreed that bringing religious leaders together is already a tangible sign of hope. The religious track is already succeeding. He does not believe that everything is positive, and that political developments are still important, but he does feel that process is being made.

Dr Kolovopoulou offered her thanks for the presentation. She shared that they will continue to pray for this matter. She reminded everyone of the biblical story of Solomon, and the two mothers who were asked about cutting the child into two. The one mother is already known to everyone: Cyprus and the second mother is Turkey. The solution of cutting the child in two is to the advantage of Turkey. Turkey is now violating the Turkish Cypriots because Turkish ships in the area are not present for the Turkish Cypriots but rather for Turkey.

Mr Eide shared that the Turkish Cypriots asked for the Turkish ship to come, and they keep insisting that they want it. The ship is in international water and the warship is not necessarily the problem. He shared that both sides insist that they want to get out of the current situation. He noted that everything in the negotiating chapters is solvable if there is trust.

Bishop Swenson offered her thanks for his time and conversation.

The general secretary added his thanks for the conversation. He stated that the WCC will continue working on this after the meeting, and both the UN and the WCC are based in Geneva, so these conversations can continue.

4.6 EXPOSURE VISITS

On 21 November, after attending the celebration of divine liturgy at the Aghia Napa Monastery in Paralimni, Metropolitan Vasilios shared some history of the monastery, and noted that the liturgy took place in the oldest part of the building, which used to be a cave. The cave was a place where a monk lived. During the Iconoclast period people hid icons and in this location, an icon was found of Mary, the mother of God. In addition to the Orthodox Chapel, there is also a Latin Chapel with paintings of women saints. Many pilgrims come to Cyprus to visit this place blessed by the miraculous icon. In the most recent past, this building was used as a conference centre by the MECC and the WCC. Now it is part of the Diocese of Constantia-Ammochostos which is in the process of creating a museum on the history of Cyprus.

On 22 November, after attending prayers at the Aghia Anna Church, in Paralimni, Metropolitan Vasilios shared some history about this church that was originally a smaller chapel, from the 14th century. Additions were made in the 16th and 17th centuries, and so the building has some architectural anomalies. The overall style of the building is a type only found in Cyprus. There are many old icons in the church, so they have created an exhibition which many people come to visit.

On 23 November, the executive committee crossed the border, and visited the northern part of Cyprus. The focus of the day was to deepen understanding of the complex history of the island, and on the occupation by Turkey of the northern part of the island. The executive committee visited a total of four historic churches, and ruins of Salamis.

On that day, after attending the Divine Liturgy at Aghios Georgios Exorinos Church, in Ammochostos, Metropolitan Vasilios offered some historical background about the church originally built in the 14th century with Syrian inscriptions on the walls, Byzantine iconography, and Western-influenced paintings.

The executive committee travelled next to the Aghia Zoni Church which, transformed into a cultural centre by the Turkish authorities, was given back to the Church of Cyprus recently a in an effort to respect holy places, build trust and create new opportunities for reconciliation.

Next, in the medieval city of Famagusta, the executive committee visited the St Nicholas Cathedral which was once the Latin cathedral. Cyprus was taken by the crusaders in 1091, and there was an establishment of a Latin hierarchy soon after that time. That church is now a mosque. It was the policy of the Ottoman Empire in 1571 to convert the main worship centres from a church to a mosque in order to show that power had changed from Christians to Muslims.

The committee then visited the Monastery of St Barnabas. Originally from Salamis, St Barnabas is recognized as the founder and protector of the Church of Cyprus. Barnabas left Cyprus to study in Jerusalem; there, he became a disciple of Jesus Christ. After the time of Pentecost, Barnabas came with Paul back to Cyprus. The story of Barnabas and Paul preaching in Cyprus is told in the Book of Acts of the Apostles (Acts 13).

Metropolitan Vasilios explained that there are two historic texts that refer to the church in Cyprus. One is the Apocrypha, from the 4th century, attributed to Mark. The second text was written in the 6th century by a monk of the monastery. It describes the miraculous way of finding the tomb of St Barnabas. On the relics of St Barnabas, the monk found a manuscript with the gospel of Matthew, and he preached from it.

After the occupation of Cyprus in 1974, only five monks remained at the monastery, but they soon had to leave because their lives were put into danger. The monastery is now a museum, and the rooms that used to house the monks are now used to exhibit archeological items. Metropolitan Vasilios himself lived at the monastery for fourteen years, and the executive committee visited what used to be his room. The executive committee also saw the tomb of St. Barnabas.

Finally, on this day, the executive committee visited the old site of Salamis, which are now ruins and a historical site. This city used to be an extensive one, including a columned courtyard, gymnasium, swimming pools, amphitheater, Roman villa, and basilica. The committee visited the site of the basilica.

After these visits, the members crossed back over the border to return to Cyprus.

On 24 November, after prayers at the Aghios Georgios Church, in Sotira, the executive committee was given some historical context about the church and the region. The name Sotira came from "Saviour". There are three churches in the immediate vicinity from the 12th century. On 25 November, after the morning prayers (matins) at the Aghia Barbara Church, in Ayia Napa, it was said that St Barbara (and St Catherine, whose memory was being commemorated on that day) are both saints who are part of our Christian story, and who bring us together in Christian faith and witness.

The Aghia Barbara Church is used daily as chapel, and people from the village come daily to pray to light candles in the church. It was noted that each village has several chapels. The chapel is only used twice a year for the divine liturgy. The main weekly worship takes place in the nearby city.

After visiting the church, the executive committee members travelled by bus to Nicosia, which is the capital of Cyprus. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, Nicosia remains the only divided capital in Europe. The executive committee first stopped in a popular market for walking and visiting. Meanwhile, the leadership of the central committee (moderator, vice-moderators, and general secretary) met with the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr. Nicos Anastasiades.

Next, the executive committee went to the Byzantine Museum and Art Gallery. The museum includes icons and mosaics from different churches in Cyprus, including the occupied part of the island. Several icons were gathered before the Turkish invasion: in 1967, Archbishop Makarios III had an exhibition, and gathered several icons for display. After that exhibition, he decided to keep them and preserve them. They were also mosaics and icons from the northern part of Cyprus which were sold to

private collectors in Europe and the USA and were eventually recuperated by Cyprus after long court cases. The oldest icon in the museum goes back to the 4th century.

5. Finance

5.1 First Presentation on Finance

Dr Abuom moderated a hearing session. She invited the committee to begin with a moment of silence.

5.1.1 Budget for 2014

Dr Abuom invited Ms Elaine Dykes, director of finance, to speak about the budget. Ms Dykes shared that in this session, the presentation would include the current situation of the finances, the forecast for this year, the highlights from the budget in 2015, and sharing some information about the income monitoring and development programme.

She first wanted to remind the committee of what was approved in July. She therefore offered these highlights from the 2013 audited position:

- Financial statements were approved and issued on 8 May 2014
- Drawdown in funds and reserves of CHF 3.2 million (2012: balanced)
- Assembly expenditure of CHF 4.9 million, and closing credit fund balance of CHF 0.2 million
- Total income (without assembly) CHF 28.7 million (2012: CHF 28.9 million)
- General reserves closed at CHF 6.1 million, compared to target CHF 7.5 million
- Loss on the Bossey guest house and conference centre CHF 0.6 million (2012: loss CHF 0.5 million)

She shared the following forecast for 2014 as compared to the budget:

- Unrestricted funds deficit CHF 335,000, compared to deficit CHF 82,000 approved
- Bossey guest house forecast net deficit CHF 184,000 (budget deficit CHF 200,000; 2013 deficit CHF 592,000)
- Total income forecast CHF 28.3 million, CHF 0.6 million over total income budget of CHF 27.7 million
- Total forecast result CHF 0.2 million increase in funds, compared with CHF 0.7 million deficit budgeted
- General reserves forecast to close at CHF 6.6 million, close to target of CHF 7 million

The unfavourable variance was because of two reasons. One, she noted that the central committee was about 100,000 more than was originally budgeted. The second issue was there was supposed to be a credit for untaken vacation. The staff was not able to take all of their vacation, and it does not reflect as an income.

The budget of 2014 as compared to the forecast was noted as:

CHF 000	**Unrestricted & Designated Fund**		**Restricted Fund**		**Total**	
	Budget 2014	*Forecast*	**Budget 2014**	*Forecast*	Budget2014	*Forecast*
Income						
Membership & UDI	4,050	*4,062*	-	-	4,050	*4,062*
Programme contributions	-	-	16,306	*16,045*	16,306	*16,045*
Investment and currency	6	*5*	129	*622*	135	*627*
Rentals, sales & misc income	6,437	6,714	791	*889*	7,228	*7,603*
Distribution of unrestricted inc	(4,050)	*(4,062)*	4,050	*4,062*	-	-
Total Income	**6,443**	***6,719***	**21,276**	***21,618***	**27,719**	***28,337***
Expenditure						
Staff costs	4,978	*5,093*	9,286	*8,907*	14,264	*14,000*
Direct costs & transfers	6,004	*6,041*	8,172	*8,052*	14,176	*14,093*
Total costs before redistribution	10,982	*11,134*	17,458	*16,959*	28,440	*28,093*
Redistributed infrastructure costs	(3,367)	*(3,357)*	3,367	*3,357*	-	-
Internal sales Bossey	(615)	*(593)*	615	*593*		
Total costs after redistribution	**7,000**	***7,184***	**21,440**	***20,909***	**28,440**	***28,093***
Surplus / (deficit)	**(557)**	***(465)***	**(164)**	***709***	**(721)**	***244***
Opening balance	(1,671)	*(1,671)*	12,430	*12,430*	10,759	*10,759*
					-	
Closing balance	**(2,228)**	***(2,136)***	**12,266**	***13,139***	**10,038**	***11,003***

She noted that Bossey may have a positive cash flow this year. One related organization, the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) is in arrears with regards to paying rent and salaries. The WCC had to cease paying WSCF this month until they further sort out some their finances. They have now prepared a reimbursement plan which has not yet been signed.

The results to September 2014 compared to forecast were noted to be:

- Overall result at 30 September is decrease in funds CHF 1.4 million, rather far from expectation
- Programme contributions stood at 58% of year's total (lag of CHF 2.8 million); CHF 3.6 million collections since 30.9.14 – now at 80%
- Bossey guest house sales 16% higher than prior year to September, with six individual months with net surplus (only one in 2013); results to date improved by CHF 357,000 compared to September 2013
- CHF 0.7 million withdrawn from general investment funds in April (and CHF 1 million in October 2013)
- One related organisation owing CHF 190,000 to WCC; a reimbursement plan has been prepared

CHF 000	Unrestricted & Designated Fund		Restricted Fund		Total	
	Sept 2014	*Forecast*	**Sept 2014**	*Forecast*	**Sept 2014**	*Forecast*
Income						
Membership & UDI	3,452	*4,062*	-	-	3,452	*4,062*
Programme contributions	-	-	9,255	*16,045*	9,255	*16,045*
Investment and currency	18	*5*	469	*622*	487	*627*
Rentals, sales & misc income	5,225	6,714	868	*889*	6,093	*7,603*
Distribution of unrestricted inc	(3,038)	*(4,062)*	3,038	*4,062*	-	-
Total Income	**5,657**	***6,719***	**13,630**	***21,618***	**19,287**	***28,337***
Expenditure						
Staff costs	3,901	*5,093*	6,707	*8,907*	10,608	*14,000*
Direct costs & transfers	4,224	*6,041*	5,881	*8,052*	10,105	*14,093*
Total costs before redistribution	8,125	*11,134*	12,588	*16,959*	20,713	*28,093*
Redistributed infrastructure costs	(2,510)	*(3,357)*	2,510	*3,357*	-	-
Internal sales Bossey	(387)	*(593)*	387	*593*		
Total costs after redistribution	**5,228**	***7,184***	**15,485**	***20,909***	**20,713**	***28,093***
Surplus / (deficit)	**429**	***(465)***	**(1,855)**	***709***	**(1,426)**	***244***
Opening balance	(1,671)	*(1,671)*	12,430	*12,430*	10,759	*10,759*
	-		-		-	
Closing balance	**(1,242)**	***(2,136)***	**12,424**	***13,139***	**9,333**	***11,003***

The balance sheet to 30 September 2014:

- Shows programme funds and general reserves are backed by deposits and cash at bank
- Valued at cost, less depreciation, buildings total CHF 41.6 million; insurance value is CHF 107 million, or CHF 65.4 million higher
- Adjusted for above, total assets available to WCC after deducting obligations is CHF 63.3 million, instead of net obligation CHF 2.1 million
- Loans CHF 48.1 million: pension fund transfer CHF 24 million; residential building CHF 10.3 million; Château de Bossey CHF 11.4 million; Ecumenical Centre CHF 2.4 million

Assets	CHF 000s	Related Obligation	CHF 000s	Net assets/ (obligations)
Land & buildings	41,661	Mortgage loans & long term deferred income	51,083	(9,422)
Non-current asset investments	9,266	Endowment Funds	8,725	541
Current asset investments & cash	10,550	Programme Funds	2,700	7,850
Other current assets	1,787	Current liabilities	1,969	(182)
	-	Long-term provisions	935	(935)
Total (obligations)/assets available after deducting obligations				**(2,148)**

Covering reserves composed as follows:		
Restricted fund for fixed assets	1,592	
Designated fund for fixed assets	12,986	(9,422)
Deficit fund to be covered by development project	(24,000)	
Designated fund for building project	1,674	
Designated programme fund	533	7,274
General reserve	5,067	**(2,148)**

After hearing the presentation, Dr Abuom invited the committee to make comments or questions about the report for 2014.

Bishop Opoko shared that good work was done on reducing the deficit. He noted that looking strictly at the issue of Bossey there are still concerns. Bossey should be making money by now. The WCC has put considerable investments into improving the infrastructure of Bossey.

Ms Dykes shared that all are in agreement that there should be profits from Bossey. She noted that it is huge improvement from a deficit of CHF 600,000 down to CHF 200,000 in one year. She noted that in 2015, the budget will include a small profit. When it starts to make money, then not only will it be a positive for Bossey, but the WCC can start to re-invest into other things that are needed.

Archbishop Vicken Aykazian noted that if there are no serious problems, then there will be no longer be a deficit in 2015. Ms Dykes affirmed that this was the case, and she shared that these positive results were because of the hard work that was done on inviting guests, on marketing, and because of the good experiences had by guests.

Several members asked if it were possible to make the WCC budget separate from Bossey. Ms Dykes shared that it is possible to look at budgets in different ways; however, it is the WCC that has invested in Bossey, and the WCC owns the building. It is a legal question and we therefore cannot avoid looking at this as a whole. She added that a separate budget is possible but it would cost more. One could set up a separate legal entity. However it would not decrease financial risk but rather it would increase administration without changing the overall financial liability.

Bishop White asked if all of the liability from Bossey falls under the WCC. The response was yes. He asked if it would be possible for Bossey to be considered a subsidiary of the WCC instead. Ms Dykes noted that this would not change anything from a financial perspective. She added that in the financial strategy that was approved by the central committee in July, that it involves progress in certain areas. Then, next year, the strategy is break-even. If these are not met, then there are other considerations.

It was confirmed that Bossey does not have a separate board of management. Dr Abuom asked if for the purposes of understanding for this executive committee it would be possible to have a separate picture.

Ms Dykes shared that there are two pillars for Bossey: the income and expenditures. Loans are taken from Bossey and the WCC as a whole. Bank accounts for Bossey as a separate organization do not exist. If the decision is made for Bossey to be separate, then it will need a separate approach to also fundraising.

Dr Abuom suggested that this is an issue that the finance sub-committee could talk more about what is feasible. It is a question of communication and image. This whole conversation would need to be part of the conversation moving into the future.

Bishop Opoko shared that that the information about the related organization, WSCF, would also be noted for the executive committee's decision making. Bishop White asked about WSCF's loan and income. Ms Dykes clarified that WSCF will have to repay the loan, but is uncertain how long this will take. She noted that they are partners with their own fundraising sources, and they share the building of the Ecumenical Centre. She said that the partner has fallen into a difficult situation in its assembly year. They have their own accounts, but because they are a tenant, they have incurred accounts that they have not paid.

In response to a question about a policy for when tenants accumulating debt, Ms Dykes noted that an organization should clear the accounts within one month. After one month, the leadership team is advised about the situation. WSCF has been in this situation for four years. They have had a written agreement in past years with regard to paying their debts in June as they expected to receive funds from an important partner in Germany at that time. This year, however, they did not receive those additional funds in June but rather in August. For this reason WCC had to inform WSCF that WCC carrying the debt would have to stop. The WSCF is an exception among the tenants.

Dr Abuom asked if the policy is in place and if Ms Dykes is satisfied with the policy; she shared that she was. Bishop Opoko noted that if WSCF is unable to pay, and if the WCC appreciates the work that they are doing, then the staff should note that here, so that the executive committee can make a recommendation to the central committee about this. Dr Abuom shared that they have explained what has been agreed to internally. It will be up to the finance sub-committee to talk about this further, and then to bring back ideas to the whole executive committee.

5.1.2 BUDGET FOR 2015

Mr Mark Johnson, finance manager, presented the draft budget for 2015. He noted that it meets the criteria set by the executive committee, that there is no deficit. He stated that in past years, the budget has been approved in February. This year, the change is that the budget is brought in November in the year before. He noted that there is less certainty at this time than if the budget had come in February 2014. The WCC will undertake a monitoring project to ensure that things stay on track.

He shared the following highlights:

- There is no requirement for transfer from unrestricted funds to restricted programme funds, as required by the executive committee at the meeting in February 2014
- Membership and other UDI is at CHF 4.26 million (forecast 2014: CHF 4.06 million)
- There is a UDI distribution of CHF 0.2 million to Bossey scholarships fund, with an opening and closing balance CHF 0.3 million
- The budget does not include the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA) at this stage
- The Bossey conference centre has a break-even result, and therefore meets the target set by AFC
- The infrastructure charge to programmes is 15.8% of programme income (forecast 2014: 16.5%; planning target: 15%).

He shared that the figures in 2015 are more of a return to the usual level. The direct costs include some significant changes in projects from one year to the next. At this year, there is a detailed list in the project expenditures which has been prepared as a back-up to this budget. This list has been made available to the associate general secretaries and to the programme committees as a tool for their work. The budget for 2015 includes a budget of 50% of the expected costs for the central committee, so that there is not a blip every two years in terms of expenditure.

Mr Johnson then presented a framework budget for 2016-2017:

- Based on strategic financial plan adjusted for membership contributions stable at the 2015 budget level of CHF 4.26 million instead of declining by CHF 0.1 million annually
- Projected reductions in staff costs concern infrastructure
- Infrastructure charge to programmes is 16% of programme income 2017
- Bossey conference centre credit of CHF 50,000 annually in favour of ecumenical formation
- Building project fund with a possible balance of CHF 0.5 million at 31.12.17

The following chart shows the Forecast 2014, Budget 2015, and the Framework 2016-2017 together:

In CHF millions	**Forecast 2014**	**Budget 2015**	**Framework 2016**	**Framework 2017**
Funds & Reserves brought forward	**10.76**	**11.00**	**10.36**	**10.22**
Income				
Membership & other unrestricted contributions	4.06	4.26	4.26	4.26
Programme contributions	16.04	15.77	15.47	15.06
Other Income	8.23	7.27	7.23	7.23
Total Income	**28.33**	**27.30**	**26.96**	**26.55**
Expenditure				
Programme & other costs & transfers	14.09	14.46	13.67	13.33
Salaries	14.00	13.48	13.43	13.34
Total Expenditure	**28.09**	**27.94**	**27.10**	**26.67**
Net Income / Expenditure	**0.24**	**(0.64)**	**(0.14)**	**(0.12)**
Inc/(decr) Restricted Funds	0.71	(0.38)	0.27	0.29
Inc/(decr) Unrestricted & Designated Funds	(0.47)	(0.26)	(0.41)	(0.41)
Funds & Reserves carried forward	**11.00**	**10.36**	**10.22**	**10.10**

The items that are being referred to the finance sub-committee for discussion are:

- Progress on income development strategy 2014-2017
- Progress with financial strategy 2014-2017
- Status on revision of policies, including *Policy for reimbursement of travel costs of governing body members*
- Status on prior recommendations of finance policy committee and finance sub-committee.

Dr Abuom invited people to make comments and pose questions on the presentations.

Dr Hutabarat-Lebang shared that there is a strong relation between programme priorities and finances. Dr Abuom affirmed that the programme sub-committee and the finance sub-committee will need to be in further conversation about this.

Bishop Opoko asked about the staff salaries. He observed that the amounts spent for staff and for programmes are almost the same. Do we have more staff? Or, do we have more programmes? He shared that there may be less funding and noted that we need to make a conscious effort to generate more money.

Mr Johnson shared that this presentation on the budget is the total for WCC and includes programmes, Bossey, and infrastructure services. With regards to the changes in the staff cost line: some of them are related to the infrastructure services, and there are reductions planned which will take place and are not related directly to programme work. Bossey is going through a process to come up with a break-even result, and the implementation of this has already begun. The process of creating the budget involves the associate general secretaries considering the staffing capacity of programmes that are planned. These figures come from these long reflections, and whether there is enough staff capacity for the programmes that are planned. There is another chart that shows the staff full time equivalents for each project on the list. The committee can consider whether this staff capacity is sufficient, or whether further adjustments will be needed.

5.1.3 INCOME MONITORING AND DEVELOPMENT

Dr Abuom invited Mr Douglas Chial, income monitoring development (IMD) manager, to share more about finances. Mr Chial said that he was in a new staff role after having been the assembly coordinator. He noted that there will be some restructuring within the IMD, and a staff position created within finance. This restructuring will free up IMD to focus more on relations with member churches and specialized ministries, programme development, strengthening narrative reporting for donors, and raising funds.

He highlighted the progress with regards to strengthening the stewardship of WCC member churches. He noted that a new membership contributions plan was approved, and launched in April.

This plan asks that churches give the same amount in 2012 or 2013 (whichever was highest), for more consultation with the member churches and it measures success both in terms of finances and fellowship. It measures the amount of financial contributions, and the number of churches who are contributing.

Mr Chial noted that the 2014 results today for the membership plan, was that currently at 91% of the forecasted budget had been received, and with several more weeks to still collect the remaining 9%. However, he noted that only 55% of the financially active churches have contributed to the plan. Therefore WCC is waiting for many small contributions to come in. Thank you cards and reminder letters were sent in the mail this week. They are anticipating a 9% increase in contributions for 2015.

He highlighted the success behind these figures and the initial results of the plan, and offered the following examples:

- The Evangelical Church of Germany, which is the single largest contributor to the plan, provided leadership by pledging a higher amount for 2014 than previously announced; and pledging to increase its contribution for 2015 to the 2012 level in support of the plan.
- The Anglican Church of Canada doubled its contribution from 2013 to 41,000.
- Many churches either gave more than requested in 2014; or increased their contribution from previous years, for example, the Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Cilicia) and Romanian Orthodox Church; the Bangladesh Baptist Church Sangha, Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa, Mara Evangelical Church (Myanmar) and Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania.
- Contributions were received in 2014 from the Union of Baptist Churches in Cameroon, the Church of Christ in Congo – Presbyterian Community, Evangelical Church of East Timor (GMIT)

and 20 other churches that had made no contribution in 2013, some of whom had not contributed in many years.

- The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the USA is ensuring the contributions of the Disciples in DRC and Argentina in 2014.
- The United Lutheran Church of Argentina, a church that has never made a contribution, made a pledge to contribute in 2014.
- In response to the contributions questionnaire, 15 churches said they want to discuss increasing their contribution; other churches have indicated the same verbally, such as the Russian Orthodox Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark.
- In addition to the 2014 membership income reported in the attached summary, CHF 61,145 was received from 23 churches in 2014 for past year's contributions.

Mr Chial shared that the financial and relational results affirm that the WCC member churches take their responsibility for the fellowship seriously and are ready to support the work of the WCC. It reflects their ecclesial understanding of the church as the body of Christ, each providing what they can for the support of the whole. He also shared that the initial success of the plan proves that a more individuated approach, taking into account the situation, potential and limitations of each member church, produces more realistic and enthusiastic results. He concluded by adding that this is also about flexibility and collaboration, not simply financial results.

5.2 AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

Dr Abuom moderated a hearing session. She invited Dr Quawas to share the report of the audit committee. He began by thanking all of the finance staff for their hard work; he also thanked the audit committee chair, Mr Alan Bittiner.

He stated that this report covered the work of the audit committee since its last report to executive committee in July 2014. The committee met on 29 October 2014 to discuss the audit plan for the financial year 2014 with the auditors, and to review the current financial situation with staff.

Audit matters

(i) Audit plan 2014
WCC's auditor, PricewaterhouseCoopers, confirmed that the interim audit will take place in early December, with focus on financial control processes. Among the selected areas for review were the Ecumenical Institute, IT general controls and facility management. The auditors confirmed that the aim would be to issue the audit report by the end of April.

(ii) Trend for requirement for special project audits
The committee noted that there is a trend that special project audits be required by partners in addition to the statutory institutional audit. At least six special audits are to be mandated for 2014. The committee noted that this will place additional demands on finance staff who prepare the reports to be audited. The committee has requested to be kept informed of the profile of the additional mandates, and has required that the final special audit reports be received by the audit committee.

Current financial situation: issues requiring emphasis

(i) Contributions income forecast 2014 and actual results at 30 September
The committee noted with concern the fact that CHF 9.2 million in contributions income had been collected by 30 September, representing only 58% of the full year forecast of almost CHF 16 million. The audit committee questioned whether follow-up with partners to request contributions due was being made as required. Staff responded that it is expected that the contributions forecast be met; and that management and staff changes are in progress with regard to income monitoring.

This requires particular attention so as to ensure that the cash deposits backing the WCC general reserves are not depleted for 2014. A return to a positive cash flow for the year is of considerable importance.

(ii) Doubtful debts
The committee heard that although one related organisation has accumulated an outstanding debt of CHF 190,000, it is not planned to create a provision, since the organisation intends to implement a reimbursement plan.

Again, the committee considers close management follow-up on an on-going basis vital for the full recovery of this debt.

Other matters

(i) Fraud risks and controls
The committee received the annual review of fraud risk prepared by the staff as required by its terms of reference. The staff confirmed that there were no instances of fraud to be reported.

(ii) Authority to sell land and buildings
The Ecumenical Centre development project is expected to result in the sale of land and buildings at some time during the coming five years. The committee considers that there is a need to clarify the authority for concluding such sales under the current Constitution and Rules.

Dr Abuom asked if there were any questions about the report.

Metropolitan Nifon asked who can authorize the sale of land according to the current constitution. Dr Quawas would like to postpone the response until there is a chance to check the constitution to determine this. It was noted that this is an important question.

Dr Abuom asked for details on how the fraud review is done. Dr Quawas noted that there is a special box in the WCC office. Comments go to the moderator of the audit committee, and no one from staff can see these comments. This allows staff to report independently and privately. The moderator of the audit committee studis it along with the audit committee. He noted that there are no issues about fraud that were brought forward to this meeting.

Ms Dykes shared that the staff do prepare an analysis of fraud risks based on the types of risks they have; this was approved by the central committee. There are also anti-fraud and corruption frameworks in place.

5.3 ACTION ON THE REPORT OF THE FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE

Dr Abuom moderated a decision session.

Archbishop Aykazian presented the report of the Finance Committee. Dr Abuom invited comments and recommendations from the executive committee.

Metropolitan Gennadios asked for a question about limiting the budget of the central committee. He wondered why the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Geneva is used exclusively for central committee meetings. There are other hotels in the area with reasonable prices. Some members of the central committee who pay for themselves do not use the Crowne Plaza; they stay in other places.

Mr Georges Lemopoulos, deputy general secretary, shared that the hotel was chosen for many reasons. One, ease transportation to and from the airport, which is taken care of by the hotel; two, all members of the central committee can stay at the same place; three, the conference office can manage 200-250 participants in the central committee when they stay in one hotel. If they are dispersed around the city this becomes a real challenge. In the past, they have explored other hotels; however, it was not workable. In the future different options may need to be explored. There are members of the central committee who are self-payers and do not staying at the Crowne Plaza because they find it expensive, and so the togetherness of the central committee is already broken. He reminded that the meeting was budgeted low, and even if they did not succeed, they did try to keep the expenses down. There were also last-minute cancellations and they were not able to recover those funds, which affected the budget for the 2014 meeting.

1. **Current financial situation**

The finance sub-committee discussed the results to 30 September 2014, as presented in the finance overview, Doc. No. 08.

The report of the finance sub-committee stated that the deficit forecast to unrestricted fund is CHF 335,000, being CHF 253,000 higher than the approved budget limit of CHF 82,000. The budget had included the assumption that the provision for untaken vacation could be reduced by CHF 150,000, resulting in a credit to unrestricted funds. Current estimates are that this reduction will not be achieved. In addition, the costs of central committee totalled CHF 600,000, being CHF 100,000 over budget. Reasons for the increased expenditure included the cost of the accommodation in Geneva during the high season; the holding of booked rooms for members who subsequently did not confirm attendance; and the cost of interpretation equipment.

The finance sub-committee noted that while members staying together in the same hotel appreciated the opportunity to eat together, some self-paying members had chosen less expensive accommodation. This was an indication in itself that alternatives should be considered. Considering what other work might be achieved with the funds, the sub-committee considered that the central committee should be organised within the limit of CHF 500,000.

The sub-committee observed that general reserves are forecast to reach CHF 6.6 million in 2014, close to the target level of CHF 7 million.

Dr Quawas also asked for clarification on “leadership of the finance sub-committee”, to approve and authorize the financial statement for 2014. Ms Dykes responded that this leadership would be Dr Gardner, Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, and Bishop Opoko. She noted that this is now formalized in the rules that leadership could be delegated by the finance sub-committee. This is because the WCC needs to issue statements to partners by the end of April and the auditors insist that they have the names of people so that this can take place each year. Dr Quawas suggested that if it is audited financial statements, to add “audited statements”. Ms Dykes noted that the audit opinion can only be issued if the delegation can be authorized and approved. It is done in parallel on the same date. Before you get the audited opinion, you need to approve the accounts, and this is required by the auditors.

Recommendation

The finance sub-committee recommends that executive committee:

(i) require that alternative plans be developed in advance to ensure that the next central committee held in Geneva can be managed within a budget of CHF 500,000; and

(ii) delegate to the leadership of the finance sub-committee the authority to approve and authorise for issue the financial statements 2014.

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

2. **Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA)**

The finance sub-committee noted that the report of the general secretary confirmed that the process for the integration of EAA was moving to a positive conclusion. Concerning the financial conditions, the sub-committee noted that at this stage, the draft budget 2015 of EAA was insufficiently developed to be considered for approval at this meeting. Further, although EAA had advised the general secretary that at least one funding partner was willing to cover a forecast deficit in 2014, estimated at CHF 60,000, no formal confirmation from any partner had been provided to WCC by 19 November.

Recommendation

The finance sub-committee recommends that executive committee:

(i) delegate to the general secretary the authority to determine whether the financial conditions have been met by 31 January 2015; and

(ii) delegate to the leadership of central committee the authority to approve the EAA Plans 2015 with the budget, and to include EAA within WCC as an ecumenical initiative; these actions to be taken by 31 January 2015.

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

3. **Château de Bossey**

The finance sub-committee stated that the results at 30 September for the guest house and conference centre reported a deficit of CHF 34,000, compared to a deficit of CHF 391,000 for the same period in 2013. The sub-committee appreciated the efforts which had resulted in the substantial improvement in financial results achieved so far this year, and noted that the forecast for the year was a deficit of CHF 184,000, slightly better than the approved budget level.

The sub-committee questioned whether an alternative presentation of Bossey's results, consolidating both the Ecumenical Institute programmatic work and the activities of the conference centre, would present a fairer financial view of Bossey. It was explained that a segregation of the conference centre activities had been decided upon by executive committee in 2010, in order to provide transparency for funding partners, whose contributions are restricted to the programmatic work. An alternative was to consider the results on a cash-flow basis, since the Bossey conference centre bears depreciation charges, a non-cash item which, when covered by income on a balanced basis, results in the generation of a positive cash flow. The positive cash flow is required to reimburse loans at CHF 250,000 annually, and for the annual re-investment in renovation and equipment.

The cash flows implied in forecast 2014 and budget 2015 are as follows:

CHF 000	**Budget 2015**	**Forecast 2014**
Net surplus/(deficit)	24	(184)
Add depreciation	533	533
Loan reimbursements	(250)	(250)
Capital expenditure	(140)	(134)
Total estimated cash flow	**167**	**(35)**

The sub-committee was pleased to note that on a cash-flow basis, results were forecast to be almost break-even in 2014, with a surplus budgeted for 2015. The sub-committee also noted that the *Financial Strategy 2014-2017* stated that "If a breakeven result cannot be forecast for 2015 in autumn 2015, then executive committee will at its meeting in that season consider an action plan to be presented by the general secretary."

In response to a question about the phrase in the report of the finance sub-committee: "require that alternative options for the conference centre and guesthouse be studies in 2015 to support an action plan required in the *financial strategy* to serve a contingency should results not be achieved in 2015 as

budgeted", Bishop Swenson shared that the strategy is about monitoring. They are counting on things going well, but also need to be prepared. It will help with a contingency plan just in case.

Bishop Opoko shared that it should be the idea for the alternative options, from the 2014-2017 Financial Strategy stated that "if a breakeven result cannot be forecast for 2015 in autumn 2015, then executive committee will at its meeting in that season consider an action plan to be presented by the general secretary". He asked if we would need to wait until that time to think about a strategy; or, can we be working on things in advance.

Dr Gardner shared that there was a proposal to consider another round of consultancy with respect to conference centre and guesthouse. But, because of the performance to date, they didn't feel that this was necessary because things were moving in the right direction. Therefore this statement is a delay of that, and a continuation of the monitoring. He suggested changing the language of the recommendation so that it captures the sense of what they want in the text, which would be to monitor.

Ms Dykes suggested that the second point of the recommendation be not included at all. She noted that there will need to be a review of the financial strategy at each meeting. If the Bossey results are not doing well, then they will already need to present alternatives. It is echoing something that is already agreed. The financial sub-committee wanted to further emphasize it, but perhaps it is not needed, and could be deleted.

Dr Tveit noted that it would be a good sign for the way that Bossey is now being monitored financially, if we can delete it. Therefore, we would say that we are monitoring it, and so we would not need to say that we are monitoring it.

It was agreed to delete the paragraph about the Bossey guesthouse.

Dr Quawas noted that there is no strategy and we would need a strategy to come to the next meeting. Dr Abuom noted that it reads "to be developed", which means that it will be developed in the future. It does not exist yet, but will soon. Dr Quawas agreed it was understood.

Recommendation

The finance sub-committee recommends that executive committee require that the integrated strategy for the Château de Bossey be developed for review at the next executive committee meeting.

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

4. Budget 2015

The finance sub-committee reviewed the draft budget 2015 which included a total income of CHF 27.3 million, total costs of CHF 27.9 million and a net deficit of CHF 0.6 million. As required by the executive committee, February 2014, there was no deficit on restricted programme funds requiring coverage from unrestricted funds. Other features of the budget presented were:

(i) a break-even result for the Bossey guest house and conference centre;
(ii) infrastructure charge to programmes at 15.8% of programme income (forecast 2014: 16.5%);
(iii) a provision of CHF 0.2 million in relation to the central committee 2016;
(iv) CHF 620,000 of contributions income unpledged, with project expenditures contingent on its receipt.

The sub-committee heard that negotiations were in progress with a potential partner for an enhanced project in relation to child rights. This project is not included in the draft budget as its implementation will depend on the successful outcome of the funding negotiations.

In 2014 the Council had implemented several unplanned activities for which fund-raising occurred during the year. The draft budget 2015 does not provide any costs for unplanned activities and the sub-committee considered that this should be addressed in the budget 2016.

The draft budget includes 45.4 full-time equivalent (FTE) programme executives, including four positions for young professionals (forecast 2014: 45.7 FTE, including one young professional position).

Recommendation

The finance sub-committee recommends that executive committee:

(i) approve the budget 2015 as presented in FIN03; and

(ii) require that a policy defining the criteria for introducing new projects into the strategic four-year programme plan, as proposed by the assembly finance committee, be prepared for consideration by executive committee in June 2015.

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

5. Income Development

The finance sub-committee reviewed a report on income development including a report on progress in relation to the milestones included in the income development strategy approved by the central committee in July 2014, *Opportunities for Income Development 2014 to 2017*.

The primary aims of the strategy are to increase undesignated income and to deepen collaboration with specialized ministries and member churches that fund the programmatic work of the WCC.

With regard to the first aim, the sub-committee observed a budgeted increase of 9.3% in membership contributions from 2014 to 2015. The WCC financial strategy 2014 to 2017, approved by the central committee in July 2014, sets the target for growth in membership contributions at 2% to 5% annually.

Appreciation was expressed for the results of the membership contributions plan, noting that the initial results indicate a more individuated approach. Concern was expressed that only 55% of contributing member churches had made a contribution for 2014 at the time of the meeting.

The sub-committee took note that more specialized ministries have offered core support for programmatic activities and also for the work of the general secretariat and communication. Total programme contributions are budgeted to be 2% lower than forecast 2014, and at CHF 15.8 million are equal to the figure for 2015 projected in the *WCC financial strategy 2014 to 2017*.

The sub-committee discussed efforts to secure new sources of income and strengthen fundraising for Bossey.

Discussion in the sub-committee indicated the need for further work and discussion on some funding initiatives:

(i) New sources of income – the sources and amounts of income coming from government sources, UN related agencies and foundations; and the principles guiding the selection of new sources;

(ii) Congregational fundraising – initiatives and methodologies for raising awareness about the WCC, raising funds and deepening the sense of fellowship;

(iii) Church relations – the need for better coordination with central committee members on activities taking place in their country and region; and engaging central committee in follow up on membership contribution requests;

(iv) Assembly – not only the need to consider fundraising for the next assembly, but to already address the relationship between annual membership contributions and delegate participation, i.e. if paid for by the WCC.

On some matters concerning the monitoring and reporting of contributions:

(i) Profile of income – reflecting both the types of income, i.e. undesignated funds and programme funds, and the sources of income, i.e. member churches and specialized ministries;

(ii) Programme contributions – the sources of income, percentage of contributions and patterns of allocation;

Recommendation

The finance sub-committee recommends that executive committee:

(i) encourage the general secretary to continue the efforts required to support the new membership contributions plan, not simply to increase the level of contribution, but to show a greater percentage of member churches participating in the plan; and to work with central committee members to strengthen the results; and

(ii) require that a draft policy and screening process guiding the development of income from new sources be presented to the executive committee at its next meeting, in June 2015, for consideration.

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

6. Capital expenditure and general reserves

It was reported that capital expenditure in 2014 was forecast to total CHF 316,000 compared with the approved budget of CHF 553,000. Reasons for the reduced level of expenditure included postponement, for different reasons, of both the windows insulation project at the Château de Bossey, and the installation of car park access barriers to the Ecumenical Centre to 2015.

The sub-committee reviewed the capital expenditure plans for 2015, totalling CH 477,000, which include the postponed projects, as well as the purchase and installation of a sound system for the main hall and chapel, and general maintenance for both the Ecumenical Centre and the buildings on the Bossey estate.

Further, the perspective for the evolution of the WCC's general reserves was reviewed, taking account of assumptions concerning capital expenditure plans, loan reimbursements and at least breakeven budgets from 2015-2017. It was noted that with relatively low capital expenditure, and a budgeted net credit to unrestricted funds of CHF 152,000, it was projected that general reserves might close at CHF 7.3 million in 2015, exceeding the target of CHF 6.7 million, or 50% of staff costs in that year. The sub-committee considered that it prudent to plan to exceed the target for general reserves, in particular given the need to assess the *building project fund* in 2015 as noted in point 7 below.

In responses to a question about the installation of a new sound system, Dr Tveit informed the group that the sound system is very outdated and is a problem for every event in the house. It is not a built-in system but equipping these spaces is critical as, even after the building development project is carried out, these spaces will remain.

Recommendation

The finance sub-committee recommends that executive committee approve the capital expenditure limit of CHF 477,000 for 2015.

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

7. Progress with the Financial Strategy 2014 – 2017

The sub-committee reviewed a report on progress with the *Financial Strategy 2014-2017* which set out the manner in which outcomes expected for 2014 were achieved, or were expected to be achieved. It was reported that an action plan would be documented early in 2015 for review with the staff leadership group, assessing and quantifying the risks arising from delay in the building project, and identifying alternatives to terms offered by the current bank, financing the fixed-term loan of CHF 24 million maturing in March 2017.

Recommendation

The finance sub-committee recommends that, in accordance with the *Financial Strategy 2014-2017*, the executive committee consider the strategy to be proposed by the general secretary based on the risk assessment and action plan, at its first meeting in 2015.

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

8. Policy for reimbursement of travel costs for WCC governing, consultative and advisory bodies

The finance sub-committee reviewed the draft of the policy for reimbursement of travel costs for WCC governing, consultative and advisory bodies. The principal changes introduced in comparison with the former policy, and following consultation with the finance policy committee in July 2014, were:

- emphasis on the importance of the participation of member churches in all aspects of the WCC's work;
- reference to the principles of solidarity and sharing;
- avoidance of the word "subsidies" where possible;
- proposal on the approach which might be taken for member churches where very long distance travel is concerned.

The principle that membership contributions should be paid for the year prior to the meeting for which reimbursement of travel costs would be requested had remained in the policy, while it had been added that the minimum contribution of CHF 1,000 would be required.

The finance sub-committee reviewed the draft, amending it to emphasise that "the member church is *in principle* responsible for travel costs"; to include the requirement that three years of contributions should be paid prior to the assembly for eligibility for reimbursement of travel costs; to remove one remaining reference to "subsidies"; and to include the requirement that WCC cover bank transfer charges when making reimbursements by bank transfer.

The finance sub-committee considers that the revised policy text meets the requirements of the finance policy committee, reflecting a balance between the responsibility for accountability and transparency, and the spirit of solidarity with member churches in different circumstances.

Recommendation

The finance sub-committee recommends that executive committee approve the revised *Policy for reimbursement of travel costs for WCC governing, consultative and advisory bodies* as attached in the appendix to this report.

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

9. Timetable for review of policies approved by executive committee

The finance sub-committee reviewed the list of nine policies approved by executive committee, with the schedule of dates for their review and update.

It was noted that the Staff Rules had been updated and approved in July 2013, and would not require review in this four-year cycle to 2017. The General Reserve Policy, the Investment Policy and the Audit Committee Terms of Reference had been updated and approved in July 2014. The Policy for the Reimbursement of Travel Costs for Governing Body Members was presented for approval at this meeting.

The four remaining policies for review were the By-laws of the Ecumenical Trust, the WCC's accounting policies, the *Principles of ethical business conduct* and the *Anti-fraud and corruption policy*. Any recommendations in respect of the by-laws would require consultation with the Board of the Ecumenical Trust, and concerning the accounting policies, with the audit committee.

The finance sub-committee noted that the principles of ethical business conduct did not include principles concerning the conduct of executives and leadership in their representation of WCC in the course of the programmatic work.

Dr Quawas asked if a timeline could be put on the Ecumenical Trust. Ms Dykes shared that the Ecumenical Trust is an entity in the United States in which the WCC is a partner with the NCC and Church World Service. It is holding investments for the WCC in a trust form, and the WCC is represented on the board. It is listed as approved by the executive committee. It was noted that all trusts need to be reviewed by the executive committee. The executive committee cannot change the by-laws of the ecumenical trust, however, it is a matter of due diligence to review. Several agreed that this was helpful background information.

Recommendation

The finance sub-committee recommends that executive committee require that:

(i) the reviews of the By-laws of the Ecumenical Trust and the WCC accounting policies be completed in June and November 2015 respectively, and the review of the *Principles of ethical business conduct* and the *Anti-fraud and corruption policy* be conducted in April 2016, with any amendments to be approved at that time; and

(ii) a Code of Conduct be developed in 2015, to include guidelines for the conduct of executives and leadership in their representation of the WCC, for review and approval by executive committee in November 2015.

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

10. Investments

The sub-committee reviewed the report on the WCC's investments, which totalled CHF 17.3 million at 30 September 2014. It was confirmed that the investments are managed in accordance with the investment policy. Returns for the period totalled almost CHF 0.5 million, with a performance of over 7% on endowment funds.

The sub-committee noted that a withdrawal of CHF 0.7 million had been made from the general fund investments in order to meet treasury requirements in the second quarter 2014, as a result of the lag in collections of programme contributions.

11. Question raised by the audit committee concerning authorities for approval of land and building transactions

The finance sub-committee considered the question raised in the report of the audit committee concerning the authorities required for the approval of land and building sales transactions. The finance sub-committee requested that an analysis of the articles of the WCC Rules in this respect be shared with the staffing, personnel and nominations sub-committee. The finance sub-committee then confirmed that the question would be addressed by that sub-committee.

12. Request for approval for the issuance of a guarantee

In accordance with Rule VIII, 5, a (ii) i) the finance sub-committee shall assist the executive committee by "ensuring that proposed loans, guarantees, pledges and any other unusual transactions are presented for approval by executive committee." The sub-committee was requested to consider the proposal that a guarantee be issued by the WCC.

The finance sub-committee referred to point 3.4 in the minutes of executive committee of July 2014, concerning the liquidation of the WCC Retirement Fund (WCC RF), and to a summary of the proposed guarantee transaction prepared by staff. Ten years ago, the WCC RF had held and then sold a hedge fund managed by the financier Madoff in the US. In 2012, the WCC RF had received an order from its bank to hold the value of USD 235,000, being the sales proceeds from the Madoff hedge fund investment, blocked in its bank account, pending legal proceedings in the US. A class action related to claims of Madoff hedge fund investors who had suffered losses in the financial crisis of 2008 is concerned. It was not known whether in due course the value of USD 235,000 would be released by the bank, or might be claimed through the legal proceedings. Under these circumstances, the liquidation of the WCC RF could not be completed.

In order to liquidate the WCC RF, actuaries had recommended that USD 235,000 be transferred by the WCC RF to the WCC, and that WCC should then issue a guarantee to the bank that it would hold the asset blocked until the end of the US legal proceedings. The finance sub-committee concurred with the guarantee transaction in principle as described, provided that the guarantee issued limited the risk to WCC to no more than the value received from the WCC RF.

Following a brief discussion, it was agreed to add "… guarantee to the bank of approximately USD 235,000, in the interests of…" in order to be clear about the amount of the guarantee.

Recommendation

The finance sub-committee recommends that executive committee require that:

(iii) the reviews of the By-laws of the Ecumenical Trust and the WCC accounting policies be completed in June and November 2015 respectively, and the review of the *Principles of ethical business conduct* and the *Anti-fraud and corruption policy* be conducted in April 2016, with any amendments to be approved at that time; and

(iv) a Code of Conduct be developed in 2015, to include guidelines for the conduct of executives and leadership in their representation of the WCC, for review and approval by executive committee in November 2015.

13. Other matters

The finance sub-committee reviewed the detailed report of the auditors for the year ended 31 December 2013, as issued on 8 May 2014, and noted that the auditors had raised no matters of concern. In addition, the sub-committee reviewed a report on issues raised from prior meetings. All issues had either been addressed, or have been addressed in the above report, with the exception of the requirement that there be a review of the "non-active member policy".

Thanks were expressed to the members of the finance sub-committee and staff, for their work.

14. Programme

14.1 FIRST PRESENTATION ON PROGRAMME

Dr Agnes Abuom moderated a hearing session. She invited the three associate general secretaries for programme to each share about their areas of work.

14.1.1 UNITY, MISSION, AND ECUMENICAL RELATIONS

Rev. Dr Hielke Wolters, associate general secretary for unity, mission and ecumenical relations, introduced the programme plans for 2015. He first shared about the WCC's planning process. He shared that staff planning days start as early as March of the year before, and these are three full days of planning. They consider what the focal points are for the upcoming year. Then, there is an annual meeting with the partners in April or May, where there is a working together meeting and a roundtable with the partners. The third phase is to develop draft plans for the next year in June, asking if the partners would be willing to financially support these plans and whether they would like to offer advice on content. The fourth phase is to refine the plans based on the feedback received in September or October. The fifth and final stage is to present the plans to the executive committee in November for action.

He shared a few words about Unity, Mission, and Ecumenical Relations. One of the major events for Faith and Order is the first commission meeting since the last assembly, which will take place in June 2015. At that time, they will look at the priorities for the upcoming year, and then will move forward with the advice received. They will also work on the document "The Church: Towards a Common Vision". He noted that several churches have produced translations of this document; and it has been translated in 15 different languages. Several seminars have taken place on the text, and this will continue in 2015. A process will need to be started on moral discernment. There is a study document ready, but it is not final and is still under consideration. Some work on church and state is also planned. This is proposed to do together with Faith and Order, the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME), and the Churches' Commission on International Affairs (CCIA). Churches in the Middle East, for example, are struggling with the role of the church in relation to the state.

He continued by saying that the first meeting of the CWME will also take place in 2015, and will continue with the CWME mission statement. In relation to the statement there is work being developed to three areas: study documents, a curriculum for theological students for the CWME, so that the document will have a place in seminaries and documents targeted to missionaries. In relation to evangelism, they will continue to do work in Europe. A handbook on evangelism will be developed and there will also be a major consultation on evangelism in the North American context, with the other regions will follow. In the area of mission, they will pay attention to mission from the margins. The phrase "mission from the margins" is currently being reconsidered but overall, it means focusing particular attention to migrant communities, Indigenous communities and more.

In the area of ecumenical relations, the joint working group with the Roman Catholic Church will have its first meeting and will set the agenda for the coming years. A joint commission will also take place with the Pentecostals. The Global Christian Forum is another area for participation.

He noted that inter-religious dialogue and participation is an area that is transversal, and it is working together with other colleagues. They are focusing on building up and strengthening the relationships with Muslims, Hindus, and more. There will also be theological reflection on religious extremism and fundamentalism. They are also working on inter-religious peace initiatives including an initiative in Nigeria, where they have done a feasibility study for a peace centre, and the signs are positive that they can build an inter-religious peace centre that will focus on monitoring violence and developing tools for peace. It will be built together with Christians and Muslims. The team continues to facilitate

the inter-religious seminar which hosts about 30 young people for a month-long living together experience.

14.1.2 PUBLIC WITNESS AND DIAKONIA

Prof. Dr Isabel Phiri, associate general secretary for public witness and diakonia, reported on her programme area. She noted that the first major area is about peace-building, conflict building and reconciliation. Here, they want to accompany member churches in solving conflicts within their own countries. The Churches' Commission on International Affairs (CCIA) and advocacy in the United Nations in Geneva and New York are located here.

There are six priority countries:

- Korean peninsula: the focus is on high-level meetings and visits
- Syria and Iraq: focus on human security
- Israel and Palestine: focus on human security, with the end of occupation as a goal; also promote dialogue with Jews, Christians and Muslims
- South Sudan: focus on humanitarian aid and high-level meetings for human security
- Democratic Republic of Congo: focus on upcoming election; also focused on gender issues, HIV/AIDS, and climate change
- Nigeria: focus on Christian and Muslim dialogue and cooperation.

In addition to the priority countries, there are priority areas, which were noted as being:

- Religious minorities
- Stateless people
- Nuclear
- Child rights
- Human sexuality.

There is one ecumenical initiative: Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI). Here, there is involvement of local and international churches to promote presence.

The second major area is economic and ecological justice. In this area, there are three projects. One project is Economy of Life for All. For this, they are working with the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the Council for World Mission (CWM), and the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) on a document called "The New Financial Architecture". It has a number of activities relate to this. There is also a pilgrimage related to climate change in preparation for Paris 2015. Sanitation and water issues will also be addressed.

The third major area is human dignity including advancing peace through social justice, capacity building and diakonia (working closely with ACT Alliance and the health and healing project, working very closely with the World Health Organization. Currently the focus is on the response from the faith communities to the Ebola crisis. This is also where the reference group on human sexuality is located. The HIV/AIDS initiative continues its work. Initially it was focused primarily on Africa; now it has gone global.

For the issue of a just community of women and men, as a transversal, it is focused on issues of:

- Human trafficking
- Gender justice
- Violence against women and children.

14.1.3 ECUMENICAL FORMATION AND THE ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE AT BOSSEY

Fr Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca, associate general secretary, education and ecumenical formation and director of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, spoke about the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, ecumenical theological education, and continuing education. He is also responsible for the two transversals: spiritual life and youth.

The Ecumenical Institute at Bossey is doing formal academic formation, and is for developing leadership in the churches. When selecting students, they want to be sure that the people who study there are heading towards leadership in the churches. They have a complementary certificate; a certificate of advanced studies; master of advanced studies (one year); and a PhD in ecumenical studies. There is a maximum of 35 students because this is the amount available for scholarships, and for physical space. All staff at Bossey work part-time there and have other responsibilities in the WCC.

Ecumenical theological education continues as it was in the past, accompanying the churches in the regions and in their theological training. It is also about strengthening the relationship with Evangelicals and Pentecostals. The Global Ecumenical Theological Institute (GETI) which took place at the Busan Assembly had a positive impact, and there are plans for this to continue; the next one is scheduled for 2017.

Continuing education is a new development following the Busan assembly. Many people around the world have shared that ecumenical formation is important, but they cannot come to Bossey for five months or for a year. Continuing education will be about cutting-edge subjects for this time. There are more than ten proposals for 2015, which come from different programmatic areas in the WCC. Whoever plans the seminar is responsible. Bossey staff participate in these seminars, but they are not responsible for the whole thing. There are many other subjects that will be proposed in the future for continuing education.

The youth programme will continue with an emphasis on formation when the youth come together. Either they come as stewards in the central committee, or as interns. There are clear proposals for formation when they come together. The work in spiritual life will also continue and efforts are being made to ensure that this is part of all of the life of the whole WCC.

Dr Abuom offered thanks for the three associate general secretaries for their presentations.

Several questions for clarification on GETI were raised by the executive committee members. IN response it was said that there is no official structural relationship between GETI and Bossey. There is participation of Bossey staff in the GETI programme. More reflection can be done on other ways for global ecumenical formation to relate more to Bossey. Dr Sauca shared that it would be idea to have GETI every year but that there are financial constraints. Because of this GETI programme are planned to coincide with major ecumenical events.

Dr Abuom noted that if people have additional questions and issues, they can take these to the programme sub-committee.

14.1.4 PROGRAMME WORK RESPONDING TO THE WCC STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2014-2017

Dr Wolters shared that there are a few related documents that will need to go to the programme sub-committee. He referred to the document Examples of Programme Work Responding to the WCC Strategic Objectives 2014-2017. He affirmed that the central committee came back with two recommendations:

- "The PC recommends to the central committee to task the executive committee to set goals for the programme priorities, goals and objectives with the metrics for evaluation."

- The PC recommends that, "given the number of the programme areas, the number of projects in each programme area be limited."

14.1.5 REFERENCE GROUPS

Dr Phiri noted that when the executive committee met in July 2014, it approved the terms of reference to two reference groups: Reference Group on Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, and the Reference Group on Human Sexuality. The general secretary invites people to be part of the references groups.

For the Reference Group on Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, the leadership team will consist of the following persons:
- Moderator: Prof Dr Magali Nascimento-Cunha (Methodist Church of Brazil)
- Co-moderator: Rev Dr Fernando Enns (Mennonite Churches in Germany/EEF)
- Rapporteur: Dr Nora Bayrakdarian-Kabakian (Armenian Apostolic Church [Holy See of Cilicia/CCIA])

The group will meet for the first time in February 2015. It was agreed that the meeting will focus on community building, possible milestones for the pilgrimage, anchoring theological reflection (study process, etc.) and communicating the pilgrimage of justice and peace.

For the Reference Group on Human Sexuality, the leadership will be as follows:
- Moderator: Cannon Rev Dr Kapya Kaoma (Church of the Province of Central Africa, Zambia)
- Co-moderator: Ms Eleni Kasselouri (Church of Greece)
- Rapporteur: Rev Dr Majorie Lewis (United Church of Jamaica and Cayman)

The general secretary has also appointed a staff group to accompany the reference group on human sexuality. The first meeting of the group took place in a form of a seminar on Creating Safe Spaces from 11-13 November 2014 at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey.

The purpose of the seminar was to:
- build community
- discuss the terms of reference and methodology of working
- defining and creating safe spaces within faith communities
- theological reflections on identity, dignity and otherness
- mapping the pilgrimage of justice and peace through human sexuality.

14.1.6 MALAWI CONSULTATION ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHURCHES AND SPECIALIZED MINISTRIES

Dr Phiri reported on the Malawi consultation, presenting the "Report of The International Consultation on the Relationship between Churches and Specialized Ministries" that had been circulated.

She drew the attention of the group to the fact that the executive committee is invited:
- to receive the Report of the International Consultation On Relationship Between Churches and Specialized Ministries;
- to mandate the general secretary to work on recommendations from the Malawi report with a direct impact on the WCC's programmatic activities and/or relational policies with ACT Alliance.

She briefly highlighted points that required action.

Ms Paulina Parihiala, advisor from ACT Alliance, shared that ACT Alliance had its second assembly a few weeks earlier, and the report of the Malawi consultation had come to the assembly and was referred to several times. There was a perspective of healing and relationships. Several testified about

problems and also solutions that they had found in their own contexts. She noted that the executive committee of ACT Alliance will be looking at the report in more detail.

Archbishop Vicken Aykazian had also participated in the Malawi consultation and shared that there were some encouraging signs from members of ACT. ACT is interested in a close collaboration with the WCC, however, there are some discouraging things as well. One example is when ACT asked member churches of the WCC to be members of ACT Alliance. ACT is a part of the WCC, so why would they ask for WCC member churches to be members of ACT? He noted that many of the African churches are not happy with ACT. These are some of the points that will need further discussion. The relationship between the two organizations should and could be better if it was discussed openly and honestly.

Dr Hutabarat-Lebang noted that there are countries where there are no WCC member churches, such as in Nepal where there are only small Christian communities. Does ACT and its ecumenical partners also involve indigenous churches? ACT needs to strengthen local churches in responding to emergencies in those particular areas. These are matters that need further consideration.

Mr Kang shared that it is still difficult to assess and discern the importance of each activity. He asked if staff could help to further facilitate the executive committee with their assessment. It is a great deal of information and there are key decisions that are expected. Dr Abuom noted that this is a good overall question for the committee to continue to consider.

14.1.7 ANTI-SEMITISM: TOWARDS AN ECUMENICAL POSITION

Dr Wolters introduced the document Anti-Semitism: Towards an Ecumenical Position. He noted the increased instances of anti-Semitism and said that the WCC cannot respond to anti-Semitism without giving further thought about the WCC's position on this. The executive committee is therefore being asked to reflect on the proposal for a paper on anti-Semitism, give guidance to the development of its content, and ask the general secretary to facilitate the drafting of a paper in consultation with Faith and Order, CWME and CCIA, for presentation to the executive committee for approval before the end of 2015.

It was noted that this paper is part of a broader process in which reflection on Islamophobia will also take place. Additionally, in the context of a Global Christian Forum initiative, the WCC is working together with partners on ways of expressing solidarity among Christians supporting those who go through difficult times of discrimination, persecution or even martyrdom.

In response to a query Dr Wolters clarified that this was not going to be developed into a statement but was rather meant to be a theological paper. The plan was not only to get input from CCIA but also from CWME and Faith and Order as well. For this reading it was meant to be only an initial discussion paper.

Archbishop Aykazian noted that if WCC is going to speak about anti-Semitism, then Islamophobia will also need consideration, given that it is so present in the Western world. He noted that so many times Jewish rights are defended because of the history of genocide/the Holocaust. But everything should be done reciprocally. He defends the rights of Jewish people and agrees that anti-Semitism is evil; but Jewish partners too need to accept that what is happening to other people is also evil.

Dr Kolovopoulou called for discretion. She understands that the paper will be a thesis on anti-Semitism. She agrees that WCC should always have a position in times of violence, but by producing such a huge work that will cover all of the commissions of the WCC, we may lose perspective. What about Christianity? To produce such a paper at a time when the Christian cry is so great and covers the whole world might raise questions. She agrees and would also like to see more about Islamophobia.

Dr El-Halabi shared that it is important to highlight the essence of the word "Semitic". Arabs and people from Mesopotamia are also Semitic. What about Arabo-phobia? In his own experienced, no matter where he travels, he is profiled as being a terrorist.

Dr Wolters shared that the paper came about from a discussion that took place after a number of incidents were recorded. The general secretary asked how we will address these. The senior staff shared that each incident could be responded to; or, there could be a position paper that is developed. The paper was therefore the initiative of the general secretary. Dr Quawas proposed that the executive committee not consider this paper and the matter was put on hold till the general secretary was present.

Dr Hutabarat-Lebang asked for prayers for the recent killings in Pakistan. Dr Abuom asked for prayers for Bishop Samuel Robert Azariah. Bishop Opoko offered prayers to close the session.

14.2 SECOND PRESENTATION ON PROGRAMME

Dr Abuom moderated a hearing session. Bishop Petra Bosse-Huber introduced the draft report of the programme sub-committee. Dr Burley read the recommendations from the report.

1. Review of the General Secretary's report

The programme sub-committee discussed the recommendation on working with UNICEF. Metropolitan Gennadios asked whether, according to UNICEF, there can be a partnership between the WCC and UNICEF. The general secretary clarified that WCC is a faith-based organization, and that UNICEF is ready to collaborate with the Council.

Metropolitan Gennadios added a question of clarification about the narrative "UNICEF-WCC collaboration on issues of Ebola (women and children)". He thought that it was affecting everyone. Dr Tveit noted that this is UNICEF's particular emphasis. In the WHO, the emphasis is for everyone.

The programme subcommittee reviewed the paragraph in the general secretary's report on Inter-religious Dialogue and Cooperation (Doc. No. 01 pt. 13) and after much discussion asked that a revised recommendation return to the plenary.

2. First Reflection on the Plans 2015

The recommendations were reviewed and after some changes were suggested during the discussion the programme sub-committee agreed to revise the recommendations.

Dr Abuom asked about the priority in starting and concluding programmes. Dr Quawas shared that if you are going to cut a programme, then you are implementing half of it. Ending the program is different from cutting.

Dr Gardner asked about the difference between "engage" and "operationally engage". Bishop Bosse-Huber shared that what was meant was that the ecumenical partners of national council of churches can take the leadership of particular programmes and projects. Not everything should be done by Geneva.

3. Review of the examples of programme work responding to the WCC strategic objectives 2014-2017

Some suggestions to the recommendation were made.

4. **Updates on the Reference Group on the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace and the Reference Group on Human Sexuality**

Some suggestions were made to the recommendations

5. **Report of the Malawi Consultation**

Dr Quawas recommended that the committee take more time and prepare this discussion for the next meeting.

Several members of the committee sought clarification on the authority of the meeting to mandate the WCC general secretary certain tasks. The general secretary noted that the meeting itself cannot make recommendations; it is only a governing body that can make recommendations. The moderator added that this executive committee can mandate, encourage, and ask staff to follow up on the meeting. It was also stated that the committee had received, but not adopted the report.

Dr Abuom asked that the committee carefully consider the report before the next meeting and that comments can be channelled through staff. It was affirmed that the executive committee would have this on the agenda for the next meeting, and committee members are asked to prepare themselves in advance for this discussion. As the meeting was co-organized by both WCC and ACT Alliance, it was agreed that the presence of ACT should also be at the next executive meeting for this discussion.

6. **Reflections on the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA) and Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative and Advocacy (EHAIA)**

There were no comments on the recommendations.

7. **Joint session with finance sub-committee**

The programme sub-committee agreed to do further work on this report, and to bring back a revised report for final approval.

14.3 ACTION ON THE REPORT OF THE PROGRAMME SUB-COMMITTEE

Dr Abuom moderated a decision session. Bishop Bosse-Huber noted that they made the relevant revisions based on the feedback of the executive committee, and that they have reformatted the text as a whole. The revised report of the programme sub-committee was read by Dr Burley.

1. **Review of the general secretary report**

With regard to

- The prospects of a UNICEF-WCC collaboration on issues of Ebola (women and children), ending violence against children, and child rights violations (Doc No. 01 pt. 8. Working Relationships and Closer Cooperation with UNICEF),

Recommendation

The programme sub-committee recommends that the executive committee:

requests the general secretary to assess the involvement of member churches, regional ecumenical organisations and national council of churches and the financial implications of a partnership between UNICEF and WCC.

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

- The programme subcommittee reviewed the paragraph in the general secretary's report on Inter-religious Dialogue and Cooperation (Doc. No. 01 pt. 13).

More discussion on the document and its terminology took place in the committee.

Recommendation:

The programme sub-committee recommends that the executive committee ask the general secretary:

> **to pursue a study, following up the WCC decade to overcome violence, on violence in the name of religion and violence against religions including to map cases of religious extremism and violence against religious freedom in all its forms and contexts, and to provide deep theological reflection on violence in the name of religion and violence against religions for the sake of policy development.**

This revised recommendation was approved by consensus.

2. Plans 2015

Dr Burley noted that the plans being approved were be the Programme Plans and Budget for 2015. The general secretary clarified that the budget had already been approved. It was agreed that the recommendation will become "approve the programme plans 2015".

Recommendation

The programme sub-committee recommends that the executive committee:

A. approves the Programme Plans 2015.
B. asks the general secretary to share the annual plans for the following year with 1-2 members of the programme sub-committee in mid-July of the current year, for detailed analysis in preparation for the meeting of the executive committee in which the plans can be approved.
C. requests the general secretary to ensure that the plans be accompanied by the minutes of the previous executive committee meeting and a report accounting for progress which explains how recommendations have been implemented.
D. urges the general secretary to prepare criteria for setting priorities and ending projects and activities for discussion by the executive committee.
E. asks the general secretary to develop simple tools of information that will include: the title of the project, a mandate from the assembly or central committee or executive committee, objectives, total budget for the project, and page number where the project can be found within the detailed plans.
F. ensures that the fellowship of member churches, ecumenical partners, regional ecumenical organizations, and national council of churches are actively engaged in the planning and implementation of some of the programme plans.

This revised recommendation was approved by consensus.

3. Review of the examples of programme work responding to the WCC strategic objectives 2014-2017

Recommendation

The programme sub-committee recommends that the executive committee ask the general secretary:

> **to develop strategic plans with priorities, goals, objectives, and indicators for each programmatic area through 2017.**

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

4. **Updates on the Reference Group on the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace and the Reference Group on Human Sexuality**

Recommendation

The programme sub-committee recommends that the executive committee: ask the general secretary:

> **to ensure that the WCC provides more clearly a leading role in encouraging churches and ecumenical partners to develop more reflections of the pilgrimage of justice and peace.**

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

The programme sub-committee recommends that the executive committee:

> **requests the reference group to re-emphasize the broadness of the topic of human sexuality as discussed in the executive committee meeting of 9 July 2014.**

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

5. **Report of the Malawi Consultation**

Recommendation

The programme sub-committee recommends that the executive committee:

A. **continues to reflect on the Malawi report and discusses it further at the next meeting of the executive committee in the presence of a representative of ACT Alliance.**
B. **requests the general secretary to ensure that work on the study document on ecumenical diakonia proceeds as planned, building on previous documents on the topic of ecumenical diakonia.**
C. **mandates the general secretary to work on recommendations from the Malawi report that have a direct impact on the WCC's programmatic activities and/or relational policies with ACT Alliance.**

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

6. **Reflections on Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA) and Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative and Advocacy (EHAIA) (Doc. No. 18)**

Recommendation

The programme sub-committee recommends that the executive committee:

A. **mandates the general secretary to take necessary steps to finalize the integration process of EAA into WCC in line with the recommendations of the executive committee listed in the minutes of 9 July 2014.**
B. **discusses the structure of how EAA relates with the WCC projects EHAIA and Economy of Life at its meeting in June 2015.**

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

7. **Joint session with finance sub-committee**

Recommendation

The programme sub-committee recommends to the executive committee:

A. **that new projects be aligned with the priority areas determined by the criteria of the mandate of the assembly, central committee, and executive committee.**
B. **that the general secretary continues to cultivate relationships with old and new funding partners and consider the establishment of unrestricted funding for urgent response to issues that demand WCC intervention.**

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

Thanks were expressed to the programme sub-committee, and staff, for their work.

15. Public Issues

15.1 FIRST PRESENTATION ON PUBLIC ISSUES

Dr Abuom moderated a hearing session and invited Mr Prove to present.

He noted that several actions had taken place on public issues since the report presented to the meeting of the central committee in July 2014. This list of actions is found in Appendix V.

He then spoke about the situation in Iraq. A small delegation went to Iraq in August with the purpose of meeting with the affected communities and displaced people who were taking refuge in the Kurdistan region of northern Iraq. They met with people who had fled because of ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria). They also met with other minority groups who were similarly affected.

He shared that many churches in northern Iraq had become places of refuge for displaced peoples. This was also true for many public places, such as schools and construction sites. A particular concern was the advent of winter, and that many people had fled with only the clothes on their backs. There is an urgent need for advocacy in the region. The WCC worked closely with ACT Alliance members, including the LWF which was already on site. They also worked with the Christian Aid programme in cooperation with a local NGO.

Mr Prove drew the attention to the group that there was a call for international protection. The people no longer trust the society in which they fled, and no longer trust the northern authorities. They can only hope to return back home with international protection. In northern Iraq, and given the nexus of issues between Iraq and Syria, there was no coalition for local protection in the region.

He shared that looking at both Iraq and Syria is needed and that there are also Islamic theological issues and interreligious issues involved. It was important that the 125 Sunni scholars expressed themselves publicly against ISIS and its ideology. This goes a long way to building trust in the area. He said that a great deal more work is needed to create any sense of hope for a return to their homes for the affected minority communities. Further initiatives will be developed including a possible visit by the general secretary with other religious leaders in 2015. The WCC will continue to work with other ecumenical partners in formulating next steps in support of Christian and other minority communities in Iraq and Syria.

The committee was invited to respond to the presentation.

Metropolitan Gennadios thanked Mr Prove for sharing this information. He asked about the local church partners. Mr Prove said that an Armenian priest was delegated to be their guide throughout their visit. Their first meeting was with a local Roman Catholic diocese, with a Syrian Orthodox parish, a Syrian Catholic bishop, and also the Armenian Orthodox clergy. They visited both church leaders and displaced peoples that were in the church compounds everywhere.

Archbishop Vicken Alemezian thanked Mr Prove for the overview and asked if there were any developments or contacts with Turkey. Turkey has a role in the region although the focus is on Iraq. In response Mr Prove shared that they are aware of the issues pertaining to Turkey's role in this contact, and its role in facilitating the entry of extremists through their border into Iraq. However, they have not had a political level of engagement with Turkey on this matter. Through the interreligious network, it is hoped that networks will soon be established in the region.

15.2 SECOND PRESENTATION ON PUBLIC ISSUES

Metropolitan Nifon introduced the draft statement on Forced Displacement, Refugees, and Internally Displaced Persons in the Middle East and the statement was read aloud for the consideration of the executive committee. People were invited to submit their comments.

Regarding the section on Cyprus, Metropolitan Vasilios shared that religious leaders are not involved in the political negotiations, and suggested that the two issues be therefore separated. He also asked that political leaders be encouraged to continue the negotiations. He invited the drafters to review the language about the events of 1974 in Cyprus and their consequences.

Archbishop Aykazian affirmed that we have a moral responsibility to write down the truth about the number of people who have been killed and who have been disappeared. The injustice of Turkey to the Cypriot people should be mentioned clearly.

In the other sections of the document there were questions on the use of the word "strangers" and "minority groups". Dr Kolovopoulou asked that a few lines be added about importance of the Christian presence in the region, and how this presence must be expressed and supported. More background on the context of crisis of displacement in the Middle East was requested.

The general secretary offered his thanks to the committee for this significant piece of work, and for addressing the issues in different contexts. He noted that it is important to look at conflicts from the perspective of those who are most vulnerable. The WCC is made up of many different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The text from Deuteronomy 10 may work better in some languages than others. He shared that if "stranger" in some contexts means something different, then this needs further reflection. He affirmed that, when we ask for the political government who are responsible for the peace, then according to their responsibilities, then we need to address this accordingly. He was also very happy to address the situation about what to say about Christian refugees. He noted that this is a question that comes up regularly.

Metropolitan Nifon thanked everyone for their comments, and said that the sub-committee would take them into consideration when they further revise the text.

15.3 THIRD PRESENTATION ON PUBLIC ISSUES

Dr Abuom moderated a hearing session. She invited Bishop Simo Peura to open the session with prayer.

Metropolitan Nifon noted that all of the earlier comments had been taken into consideration, and that the sub-committee had two documents to present to the executive committee:

- Statement on Forced Displacement, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in the Middle East
- Procedures for Dealing with Public Issues, Revised

For the Statement on Forced Displacement, Refugees, and Internally Persons in the Middle East, in reviewing and revising this statement, the sub-committee drew inspiration especially from the general secretary's report, the discussion with the UN Special Envoy on Cyprus, and input from executive committee members and observers from or with experience in the Middle East region, and from exposure to the history and current reality of Cyprus.

The public issues sub-committee recommended the revised draft statement for adoption by the executive committee. Mr Prove outlined the changes that had been made to the first draft. Some suggestions were made by the members.

Archbishop Aykazian asked to whom the WCC is appealing in its member churches. He noted that the problems are not created by the local governments but rather by the terrorists. Dr Tveit confirmed that we are addressing many: everyone who has eyes to see and ears to hear; if we wanted to name people specifically, it would be a long list. Really, it is addressed to everyone.

15.4 FOURTH PRESENTATION ON PUBLIC ISSUES

Dr Abuom moderated a hearing session.

Dr Burley had mentioned the situation in Ferguson, Missouri in the United States in prayers, and invited people to pray for the challenges in that location. The general secretary spoke about the many dramatic events in the USA related to violence and reported from his recent trip to the country where he had been in conversation with the leadership of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA. He noted that the NCCCUSA issued a statement which was very appropriate. The situation is dramatic, tragic and invites prayers not just in the USA but in fact in the whole family of churches. This is a time for prayer and of working towards justice and peace.

Bishop Swenson noted that both she and Archbishop Vicken Aykazian were on the board of the NCCCUSA. They would have been at the governing board meeting, just prior to the decision, but were at the WCC executive meeting instead. She agreed that this would be an appropriate way of expressing solidary. Dr Tveit suggested an open letter in addition to writing to the NCCCUSA and expressing WCC's support with them during this time

Dr Quawas felt that a minute rather than an open letter would be stronger given the major events taking place there. Metropolitan Nifon agreed to take it back to the sub-committee and draft a minute on behalf of the committee.

15.5 ACTION ON THE REPORT OF THE PUBLIC ISSUES SUB-COMMITTEE

Dr Abuom moderated a decision session.

Three documents were brought for approval:
- Forced Displacement, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Middle East
- Procedures for Dealing with Public Issues
- Minute on Racial Tensions in the United States of America

The revised statement, entitled Forced Displacement, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Middle East was adopted by consensus (The full text of this report is in Appendix V.)

Following the referral of "Procedures for Dealing with Public Issues" by the central committee meeting in July 2014, and having considered the proposed revision of the relevant procedures

The "Procedures for Dealing with Public Issues, Revised" was adopted by consensus (See Appendix V).

Metropolitan Nifon read the draft "Minute on the Decision of the Grand Jury not to Indict in the Care of The Death of Michael Brown".

Dr Burley offered his thanks for the drafting of the minute. Several members asked questions for clarification and made concrete suggestions to the text.

Dr Quawas noted that there is something unclear, and that it does not go with the principle of good governance and in the judiciary system. If we say that the decision was incorrect is to interfere with the legal system. We need to instead tackle the system in the United States, and not focus as much about the specific decision. He is concerned that this would be interfering in a decision that we are not qualified to do.

Dr Tveit noted that this is an important point for the relation between our text and the NCCCUSA text. As non-US citizens, the executive committee can say that we are concerned that the system allows for this kind of outcome. The general secretary also encouraged caution in criticizing the system but that it is important to state that we are concerned about the system as a whole and about the issues of racism.

With these revisions, that the staff will finalize the minute.

Bishop Opoko then shared his concern about news of the 28 people who were murdered after being asked to profess to Islam in Kenya, and also about the 48 fisherman who were executed in Nigeria. He asked if these issues could also be addressed. At the suggestion of a member, it was agreed that the general secretary would write to the Kenya Council of Churches. A letter and a statement to the churches would be appropriate, along with the action that will be done. Dr Tveit shared that he would write a letter that expresses concern from the executive committee for Kenya.

With regard to Nigeria, Dr Tveit stated that a letter was written to the president of Nigeria two weeks earlier; perhaps before taking further action, time should be given for a response. As there was not enough time left in the meeting, the general secretary suggested writing a letter to the Christian Council of Nigeria. He noted that it is the practice to study properly and to have all of the relevant documents before issuing a statement of a minute. Bishop Opoko suggested that a communication be sent to the Christian Council of Nigeria mentioning that a letter also went to the president and that WCC is in solidarity together with the churches.

These two actions were agreed by consensus.

The "Minute on the Decision of the Grand Jury not to Indict in the Care of the Death of Michael Brown" was renamed to become the "Minute on Racial Tensions in the United States of America (Reaction to the Decision of the Grand Jury not to Indict in the Case of the Killing of Michael Brown)".

Mr Prove read the revised minute. The minute was approved by consensus.

Thanks were expressed to the public issues sub-committee, and staff, for their work.

16. Staffing, Personnel and Nominations

16.1 MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Dr Abuom moderated a hearing session. She invited the deputy general secretary, Mr Georges Lemopoulos, to share background on membership matters.

Mr Lemopoulos shared that Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR) has requested official recognition as a specialized ministry in working relationships with the WCC. The CLWR has been working with the WCC for many years. The final decision will be made by the central committee; however, the executive committee will need to agree in principle that the organization meets the criteria. If the executive committee agrees in principle, then the general secretary will invite the organization to the next roundtable meeting, and to the next central committee meeting.

Archbishop Vicken Aykazian asked about the difference for a specialized ministry between participating in the WCC and in ACT Alliance. Mr Lemopoulos shared that these are two different things. Any organization can apply to be a member of ACT Alliance. An ecumenical organization can have a working relationship with the WCC, but they are not members of the WCC.

Metropolitan Nifon asked for clarification, whether membership should be referred to the Permanent Committee on Consensus and Collaboration. Mr Lemopoulos shared that indeed all applications for WCC membership go to the Permanent Committee before they are presented to the central committee for action. Here we have a partner organization and thus it is not a question of membership.

Metropolitan Gennadios suggested that it would be helpful to have a bit more history and background information about the CLWR, since not many people know much about them. Mr Lemopoulos noted that since the matter will be referred to the staffing, personnel and nominations sub-committee, background information could be provided for their information.

Mr Lemopoulos outlined than the document about "Nominations to Consultative Bodies: Proposals for Additional Young Members" (Doc. 10, App. 2). At its meeting in July 2014, the central committee made the decision that four young members be added to each of the consultative bodies. The general secretary then wrote to member churches, inviting them to submit names of young people. As of 13 November, 44 member churches had responded, and proposed 103 nominees that fitted the young category of 18-30 years old (except for the Faith and Order Commission, which is 35 years old).

A tentative proposal was made in the document, giving priority to young persons coming from churches not yet represented in governing bodies; from churches that are under-represented in governing bodies; and Orthodox churches that are under-represented. It is also suggested that there could be a slight increase in the number of women over men to begin addressing the current imbalance in governance. Also included in the document are comments on nominations from the commission directors.

Metropolitan Gennadios noted that they have the folder with all of the applications from each individual person from the churches, so they can provide that during the meeting of the sub-committee.

Rev. Baoping Kan noted that in WCC, lists of member churches are organized by church names rather than country.

All of these names and proposals that are listed in the report will be referred to the staffing, personnel and nominations sub-committee for action.

16.2 FIRST PRESENTATION ON NOMINATIONS

Dr Abuom moderated a hearing session. She invited Mr Lemopoulos to share two documents on "Ecumenical Commitment of an Applicant Church – a discussion starter" (Doc. 02) and on "Policies on Representation" (Doc. 03).

Mr Lemopoulos shared that the first item comes from the assembly to the central committee; it was later referred to the executive committee. The committee will therefore need to explore how to unfold and define the ecumenical commitment of an applicant church. The executive committee can have a first round of conversation and take advice from the Permanent Committee on Consensus and Collaboration. He noted that this is at a very early stage, and from there will see in which direction we could move.

Mr Lemopoulos shared that the second item too comes from the assembly to the central committee and was subsequently referred to the executive committee. The Council is often criticized for not being able to find the most appropriate ways of reflecting the reality of the membership. There is always frustration at the end of any nomination/election process. An open and frank discussion at the level of governance can help us to build a common understanding. We should think of the upcoming rotation in the membership of the executive committee. Therefore, there is a suggestion that in its next meeting the executive committee discusses the matter.

16.3 ACTION ON THE REPORT OF THE STAFFING, PERSONNEL AND NOMINATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE

Bishop Mary Anne Swenson moderated a decision session. Rev. Garland Pierce, senior assistant to the general secretary, was invited to read the report of the staffing, personnel and nominations sub-committee. The executive committee then considered each recommendation in the report.

Recommendations:

1. *Ecumenical Commitment of an Applicant Church – A discussion starter*

The executive committee:

a. **agrees that it is not necessary to amend Rule I in order to clarify this matter;**
b. **invites the permanent committee on consensus and collaboration to also reflect on the meaning of "ecumenical commitment" and offer advice to the executive committee (November 2015);**
c. **encourages the WCC staff dealing with membership matters and WCC staff in charge of ecumenical relations to assist NCCs, REOs and CWCs to develop their respective membership policies;**
d. **intends to include in its minutes the necessary clarifications for all persons involved in receiving and processing membership applications.**

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

2. *Membership Matters*

Recognizing the long-standing relationship between the WCC and the Canadian Lutheran World Relief, the executive committee:

a. **accepts, in principle, the application of the Canadian Lutheran World Relief to be recognized as specialized ministry in working relationship with the WCC according to Rule XVII;**
b. **recommends that the central committee accepts the application;**
c. **anticipating the decision of the central committee, encourages the general secretary to invite the Canadian Lutheran World Relief to the next round table meeting of specialized ministries in working relationships with the WCC, June 2015;**
d. **agrees that the general secretary invite the Canadian Lutheran World Relief to the next meeting of the central committee, June 2016, pending the final decision of the central committee.**

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

3. Policies on Representation

Recognizing the need for a common discourse on how we work toward representation in WCC governing and consultative bodies in the midst of the member churches' diverse understandings and practices related to representation, particularly as we look toward the mid-term election of executive committee (2016), it is recommended that there be further reflection related to policies and practices.

The executive committee asks the general secretariat to prepare a questionnaire to solicit responses and suggestions from central committee members. The questionnaire will be related to the policies and procedures that might lead to the stated representation goals in the WCC rules. The process will include:

- **review by the staffing, personnel and nominations sub-committee**
- **dissemination to the central committee for response prior to the 2015 executive committee meeting in Armenia.**

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

4. Nominations to Consultative Bodies for Additional Young Members

The following names are recommended to be added to the respective consultative bodies:

Faith and Order

Greek Evangelical Church	Mr Sotirios Aggelos Boukis
Gereja Kristen Indonesia	Ms Yolanda Pantou
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark	Ms Maria Louise Munkholt Christensen
Ecumenical Patriarchate	Ms Kristina Mantasasvili

Commission on World Mission and Evangelism

Reformed Church of Christ in Nigeria	Ms Rosa Muda
Eglise Protestante Unie de Belgique	Mr Johannes Bronsveld
Moravian Church of Jamaica	Ms Heather Robinson
Church of Greece	Ms Aikatarini Voulgari

Commission on the Churches and International Affairs

Iglesia Metodista en el Uruguay	Mr Nicolas Sosa
Church of Melanesia (Anglican)	Mr Holland Sikou
China Christian Council	Ms Xiaoyan Zhou
Orthodox Church of Finland	Ms Maria Mountraki

Education and Ecumenical Formation

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Romania	Ms Eszter Kalit

United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India	Ms Chrisida Nithyakalyani
United Congregational Church of Southern Africa	Mr Wellington Mthobisi Sibanda
Coptic Orthodox Church	Mr Ramy Sarofin Hanna

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

5. *Planning for future Governing Body Meetings*

Given the heavy agenda anticipated for the 2016 central committee meeting, it is recommended that:

a. **there be an executive committee meeting in mid-April 2016 (dates to be determined in relation to venue)**
b. **a reminder be added to the document that those elected in 2016 to the executive committee take office on 1 January 2018**
c. **executive committee members be encouraged to look at the flow of Doc. 11 and offer comments to the general secretariat so that any other matters that need to be considered can be added.**

This recommendation was approved by consensus.

Thanks were expressed to the staffing, personnel and nominations sub-committee, and staff, for their work.

Bishop White closed the session with prayer.

16.4 STAFFING AND OTHER MATTERS

Dr Abuom moderated a closed session. She invited the general secretary to table the matters that require the attention of the executive committee. Positions for staff vacancies, proposed appointment, departures, and arrivals were all noted.

Vacancies:
The general secretary noted that for the position of the Faith and Order Director, the recruitment is normally done along the lines of a Memorandum of Understanding between the WCC and Faith and Order. The first meeting of the Faith and Order Commission will be in June 2015, following the next WCC executive committee meeting.

The leadership of the central committee suggested that it would be helpful to not wait until after the commission meeting in June to start the process. They instead agreed that there should be a committee to develop the vacancy notice and take part in the interview panel. Dr Tveit shared that two members of the leadership of the Faith and Order Commission were already appointed: the moderator by the central committee and one vice-moderator proposed by the PCPCU. Two more people (e.g. the former moderator Metropolitan Vasilios, and one new member of the Faith and Order, preferably a younger member) could be added. These four persons, together with colleagues from the senior leadership team could lead the screening and shortlisting process, as well as the interviews, and then to come to consensus about a name to be brought for consideration by the executive committee in June. Then, the person could attend the Faith and Order Commission at their first full meeting in 2015.

Metropolitan Gennadios noted that the results of the interview for the director should be communicated to the commission before bringing back to the executive committee. Dr Tveit noted that Faith and Order should know the name before the executive committee will. He added that if this procedure is agreed on, then the recruitment for the Faith and Order director can be started.

This was agreed upon by consensus.

The two other vacancies, for the Rental Manager and for the Assistant Editor, will go through the normal recruitment processes.

Proposed Appointment:
Dr Tveit noted that the position for the Director of Communications was opened in September; they received about 40 applications, and interviewed four people.

Ms Marianne Ejdersten (Church of Sweden, Lutheran, f/l) was proposed to be the new director of communications. The appointment was approved by consensus.

Dr Tveit added that he will write to the Church of Sweden and thank them. He shared that the church will continue to support her salary and that this makes it possible for WCC to appoint others. This was also agreed upon.

Departures and Arrivals:
A list was shared of staff members who had left the services of the Council since the last executive committee meeting, who will leave the services after this meeting, and staff members that have assumed responsibilities in Geneva, appointed under the authority of the general secretary.

Dr Abuom stated that the executive committee will want to express our gratitude to them for the service.

17. Future Central Committee and Executive Committee Meetings

The dates and venues of upcoming meetings are noted in Appendix VI. The site of the central committee meeting in Norway in 2016 is a pilgrimage site, and so people may want to arrive and allow for additional time in order to participate in a pilgrimage.

Dr Quawas asked if there was an invitation from a member church for the executive committee meeting in November 2015, if it would be possible to accept that invitation. Dr Tveit noted that it is helpful to have only one of the executive meetings outside of Geneva per year because of costs for staff. Dr Quawas is in conversation about having that meeting in Jordan; it was noted that March/April 2016 would be a better moment for a meeting outside of Geneva.

Dr Abuom noted that the purpose of the spring 2016 meeting would be to focus on decisions to be made in advance of the central committee meeting; including the process for rotating membership on the executive committee.

Mr Lemopoulos noted that there is a question of budget, and whether we can afford to have two full executive committee meetings along with a central committee meeting. This will also need to be a consideration.

18. Closing Actions

18.1 EVALUATION AND REFLECTION ON THE MEETING

Dr Abuom welcomed Ms Marianne Ejdersten to her new position as the director of communications. She expressed her congratulations on her appointment, and thanked the Church of Sweden for seconding her to WCC.

Ms Tara Tautari invited people to evaluate the meeting, so that their needs will be met moving forward. People were invited to offer their reflections on the meeting.

Bishop Swenson shared that she had experienced some amazing moments this week, including receiving hospitality from Metropolitan Vasilios and from the whole church community. It was an opportunity to learn more about Cyprus and to discover more about a country that was divided. She expressed her profound thanks.

Archpriest Mikhail Goundiaev shared that there was a common feeling of appreciation for the hospitality.

Bishop Dr Chibuzo Raphael Opoko also shared in the sentiments of appreciation. He commended the way in which the committee went through the meeting. He noted that there was space for several clarifications to be made. Staff were to be commended for their hard work and sacrifice; in addition to the members of the executive committee. He also offered his thanks to Metropolitan Vasilios for his lavish hospitality.

Dr Audeh Quawas added his thanks to the host church. He noted that at times, during the meeting, he spoke many times. He is known to look for perfection and exactitude in any work he does. He hopes that fellow members of the executive committee will also tackle issues and not leave him alone to speak.

Dr Hyun Ju Bae offered her thanks to Metropolitan Vasilios. Koreans tend to believe that South Korea is the only divided country, which is not true. This was a very eye-opening experience and she noted similarities between Korea and Cyprus. People agree on the future, but people do not have trust. She looks forward to continuously learning from the religious leadership in Cyprus about the space of healing on human beings and about peace and reconciliation. She noted that in Korea there is not a strong Orthodox presence and so it was good to be here to be reconnected with this ancient place of Christianity.

Bishop Petra Bosse-Huber also thanked the hosts for the overwhelming hospitality, and for sharing the love of Cyprus. She appreciated hearing the stories of Barnabas and Paul and it was moving for her to see this. She reiterated the importance of overcoming division and expressed her thanks to staff for all that was brought into discussion. She thanked the moderator and vice-moderators and shared that it was a good time to be together and a good learning programme.

Dr Paul Gardner concurred with all of the good comments that were expressed. He noted that every day, he has been so pleased with the tremendous hospitality of the Cypriots. He shared that the pilgrimages to the churches each morning in the chapel were a delight and refreshment to the soul.

Dr Agnes Abuom affirmed that the voices and the appreciations from the executive committee members were genuine and deep sentiments were expressed. She also reflected that it was good to see Metropolitan Vasilios in his own context. She wanted to thank him for this period; it also helped the executive committee to become a bit closer with one another, even in the sub-committees. This time has contributed to this and she was grateful.

Metropolitan Vasilios offered his thanks for the comments. He shared that with his experience of being a member of the central committee, he was expecting some critique. He asked for forgiveness for any shortcoming, particularly the fact that two persons had difficulties with their visas. He thanked the executive committee for coming to Cyprus. He noted that his people were impressed at having the meeting here. This was an enriching experience as they try to have an open, hospitable and active diocese.

18.2 APPRECIATIONS

The general secretary expressed his appreciation to the leadership. He noted that this is a very dynamic and open circle where we do our work together well with the human values of friendship and relationships. He shared that he is very impressed by his colleagues as when the meeting is outside of Geneva the workload is heavier for staff. He particularly mentioned the colleagues who are relate to the general secretariat, and who are responsible for preparing this meeting.

He noted that for the next two months (January and February) he would be on study leave writing a publication about what the pilgrimage of justice and peace might mean.

Dr Tveit thanked Metropolitan Vasilios once again for his hospitality.

Dr Abuom reflected on Ecclesiastes 9:10, and shared that the committee had done what it could do. She invited all to depart with the blessings of God, and that all would continue to seek God's help on our pilgrimage of justice and peace, and proceed in prayer and faith. She shared that whatever we do as a governing organ, then Christ shall remain the pillar of our lives. She hoped that the Lord may bless all.

18.3 CLOSING

Archbishop Nareg Alemezian closed the meeting with prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

APPENDIX I: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Officers:	Dr Agnes Abuom	Moderator
	H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima	Vice-Moderator
	Bishop Dr Mary Ann Swenson	Vice-Moderator
	Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit	General Secretary

Members:

H.G. Archbishop Nareg Alemezian
H.E. Archbishop Dr Vicken Aykazian (ex officio)
Rev. Dr Hyun Ju Bae
Bishop Petra Bosse-Huber
Dr Ulysses Burley III
Rev. Dr Paul Gardner
Archpriest Mikhail Goundiaev
Rev. Dr Henriette Hutabarat-Lebang
Rev. Baoping Kan
Mr Thomas Hyeono Kang
Prof. Dr Marina Kolovopoulou
Ms Martina Viktorie Kopecká
Rev. Taaroanui Maraea
H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Nifon of Targoviste
Bishop Dr Chibuzo Raphael Opoko
Bishop Simo Peura
Dr Audeh B. Quawas
Bishop John F. White

Advisers:

Dr Elias El-Halabi, Middle East Council of Churches
Ms Paulina Parhiala, ACT Alliance

Host: H.E. Metropolitan Dr Vasilios of Ammochostos-Constantia, Church of Cyprus

Apologies:

Dr Abba Haile Mariam Melese Ayenew
Bishop Samuel Robert Azariah
Rev. Dr Micheline Kamba Kasongo
Rev. Dr Sharon Watkins (ex officio)

Minute-Writer: Ms Adele Halliday

Staff:

Mr Doug Chial
Ms Catherine Christ-Taha
Ms Elaine Dykes
Ms Marianne Ejdersten
Mr Mark Johnson
Mr Yorgo Lemopoulos
Prof. Dr Isabel Phiri
Rev. Garland Pierce
Mr Peter Prove
Ms Naveen Qayyum
Fr Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca
Ms Tara Tautari
Rev. Dr Hielke Wolters

APPENDIX II: MEMBERSHIP OF SUB-COMMITTEES

Finance
H.E. Archbishop Dr Vicken Aykazian (moderator)
Rev. Dr Hyun Ju Bae
Rev. Dr Paul Gardner
Archpriest Mikhail Goundiaev
Mr Thomas Hyeono Kang
H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Nifon of Targoviste
Bishop Dr Chibuzo Raphael Opoko
Rev. Taaroanui Maraea
Bishop Mary Ann Swenson

Programme
Dr Agnes Abuom
Bishop Petra Bosse-Huber (moderator)
Dr Ulysses Burley III
Dr Elias El-Halabi
Rev. Dr Henriette Hutabarat-Lebang
Prof. Dr Marina Kolovopoulou
Ms Pauliina Parhiala

Public Issues
Dr Agnes Abuom
Bishop Petra Bosse-Huber
Dr Elias El-Halabi
Rev. Dr Micheline Kamba Kasongo
Mr Thomas Hyeono Kang
H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Nifon of Targoviste (moderator)
Ms Pauliina Parhiala
Rev. Taaroanui Maraea

Staffing, Personnel and Nominations
H.G. Archbishop Nareg Alemezian
H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima (moderator)
Rev. Baoping Kan
Ms Martina Viktorie Kopecká
Bishop Simo Peura
Dr Audeh B. Quawas
Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit
Bishop John F. White

Apologies:
Dr Abba Haile Mariam Melese Ayenew
Bishop Samuel Robert Azariah
Rev. Dr Micheline Kamba Kasongo
Rev. Dr Sharon Watkins

APPENDIX III: REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Dear members of the executive committee, advisors, guests, and colleagues,

1. A Movement in Faith

We are on a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. This sentence I have said and written many times the last months. We are in the one ecumenical movement together. We are seeking the visible expression of our unity. In our time, I find that we are particularly called to find new expressions of our unity in solidarity with suffering Christians in many parts of the world. We are called to unity in order to serve the world together in its God-given longing for justice and peace. As churches and Christians, we pray daily for the Kingdom of God to come, for the will of God to be done on earth as it is in heaven. The world with all its overwhelming crises these days needs people of faith, who are willing to let their faith be much more than positions of the past or identities that separate us. The world needs people of faith who believe in God and who are willing to move when God calls us to move.

Brothers and sisters, this ecumenical movement is a movement in faith. As pilgrims, we are committed to stay together by moving together. We are moving into what we still do not know and what we have not seen. We trust God; and, we do believe that the triune God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, will be leading us. We have to move as the world moves into new landscapes of time and events; we need to move in ways that exemplify mission also from the margins. We need to move into new relations with other partners. Indeed we do so – at least we have to do so - together with new generations.

"Is there something new in this; or, are these just the same old things," so I am asked now and then. The more I reflect on this theme, the more I am convinced that this pilgrimage is both a way to continue the one ecumenical movement and a way to move forward in our time that opens for new dimensions and new practices than those we have had before. I think anything else would be irresponsible. We have a legacy to learn from and to be continued; however, we also must find and develop new ideas. New insights and expressions are developed by reflecting on this motto of the Pilgrimage, as I reported also to the central committee in July. This is an experience I have had many times in the last year. We also need to develop new tools, patterns and resources to do this work.

2. The Pilgrimage and its Double Dimension for the Work of the WCC

We are on a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. This is true for this meeting as well, in two understandings of the motif – at least.

First, you are given the task to provide governance and leadership to the WCC as this fellowship and organization unfolds its vision and its one, integrated strategic plan under this title and motto of the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. The resources to equip us for this responsibility have been well-prepared for this meeting; and, I trust that we are able to make the proper decisions together these days.

Secondly, we are already on the way; and therefore, we also come here to report what has happened so far, which processes already are started, what events have happened, about travels taken, and what milestones are achieved already.

This double approach has been deliberately chosen; the pilgrimage is both the uniting perspective of the plans and projects to get a clearer overall profile and direction for our work and it is a collection of some particular initiatives and processes. Most of them should be done together with member churches, many together with ecumenical partners and others.

This double approach is a challenge; but, it also has huge potential. As executive committee, we are responsible for initiating and monitoring both dimensions, both the integrity of the plans and the special initiatives for justice and peace. A reference group for the Pilgrimage has been appointed according to our decisions in July; and, they will particularly focus on how the special initiatives for a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace are moving and involving the many, also other partners of good will outside the WCC.

We are here to reflect on how we get the right dynamic between the two dimensions so that we really move together with the first full year plans and budgets according to the strategic plan approved by the central committee in Geneva in July this year. Many are anxious to see that we are moving; and, that excites me. However, we should not be shy in reporting that we needed some time to unfold this new approach and to organize ourselves accordingly. Neither should we be shy in reporting from the secretariat, and from the churches and other partners that several things are already happening.

We are getting into a new pattern of meetings and corresponding agendas. This November meeting should be when we make decisions on how we pursue the strategic plan of a Pilgrimage for Justice and Peace for the WCC the next year and with what priorities in the budget. The meetings in June should monitor where we are with our plans and budgets, and every second year be held together with the meetings of the central committee. I think we learned from the last central committee meeting that the executive committee should meet just before the central committee to participate in the consensus process and offer its work of preparations and recommendations to the central committee.

3. Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace in Cyprus

We are in at least one more sense on our pilgrimage, as we are gathered here for the first ordinary meeting of the executive committee outside Geneva since the assembly. To do so in this biblical land of Cyprus makes a lot of sense; this is a land that is forever part of the Christian history as important parts of the journeys of the first Christian apostles and missionaries happened here. We will be reminded on the spiritual heritage of this island, and how it belongs to our common Christian history. We are here also in a crucial time for the country and for the region around it.

We are generously invited by the Church of Cyprus by His Beatitude Archbishop Chrysostomos II, the head of one of our member churches. This invitation is facilitated by HE Metropolitan Dr Vasilios of Constantia-Ammochostos; and, I want to express my deep gratitude for his efforts to make this happen. We are invited into the life of this church and to meet the ecumenical family and the faith leaders here.

I am very glad we can have both this and the next meeting (June 2015 in Armenia) of the executive committee in contexts of our Orthodox sisters and brothers. To see and hear from these churches about their heritage, their life, as well as their challenges and expectations of the WCC is of great value to all of us. This meeting happens in a time when new, determined steps are taken towards an Orthodox council in 2016. That is an event of great significance for the Eastern Orthodox family, but also for the whole ecumenical family; and, I hope we hear more about that process as well.

We are invited to meet with the President of Cyprus during these days. We are in a country that has a history of being a meeting place and refuge in times of crises in the region. Through its membership in the European Union, Cyprus has proven its commitment to the values of human rights and democracy and to participate in peace processes here and elsewhere. With its many challenges the European Union is carrying the legacy of the visions for peace and justice in Europe.

We hope that our presence here becomes a sign of solidarity with the people of this island that remains divided since 40 years now. We will also meet with the Envoy of the UN Secretary General, Mr Espen Barth Eide, working here to support the peace efforts in Cyprus, during our days here. This nation is also suffering from the consequences of the financial crisis and growing tensions concerning

natural resources in the Mediterranean Sea. Cyprus is clearly a station on our own pilgrimage of justice and peace.

4. Justice and Peace in the European Context

Let me continue by referring to four anniversaries I have addressed in the last months related to the European context as part of this pilgrimage.

In September, I participated in a centennial marking the beginning of the First World War, in Antwerpen, Belgium, one of those areas that became a battlefield and a grave for so many human beings, soldiers and others. War is always a tragedy for the creation of God. The memorial happened in the annual inter-faith prayer for peace organized by the Roman Catholic St Egidio lay movement, a faithful partner to the WCC in our work for Christian unity and peace. The reality that a conflict can be violent, and develop into a war, but also into a World War with great implications on many continents, is a heavy legacy for Europeans from the 20th Century. Preaching in the Cathedral of Antwerpen, together with church leaders from Iraq and Syria, made me a representative of the ongoing ecumenical commitment of the WCC to work for just peace. We are not talking about history only as something to remember, but also from which to learn. And we have to admit that some of the reasons for the breakdown of the nation states and their ability to protect their citizens, in Syria and Iraq, are due to the way that region was divided into those states after the end of the empires and the war.

Some days ago, the Church of Sweden marked the centennial of the consecration of Nathan Söderblom as Archbishop of Uppsala. His vision and his restless efforts to make the churches unite in an organized ecumenical movement, particular through the great meeting for Life and Peace in Stockholm 1925, belongs to the origins of what became the World Council of Churches. These initiatives were greatly inspired and supported by the famous encyclical in 1920 from the Ecumenical Patriarch. Söderblom was deeply worried that the WWI did not lead to a just peace, rather to the contrary. That he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts reminds us that the churches should and can make significant contributions to a just peace. The Church of Sweden and the WCC have extended an invitation to key partners to a big conference in Sweden in the beginning of December this year to have a wide discussion and workshops on how the ecumenical movement shall be a peacemaker and peace builder in our time.

The 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989, gives another fruitful entry point for reflections on the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. The Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989, did not fall all by itself but, rather, thanks to a movement of many people who demonstrated peacefully in the streets.

The EKD synod celebrated the 25th anniversary with a worship service in the Church of the Holy Cross in Dresden. It was there that, during the months, weeks and days that preceded the fall of the Berlin Wall, prayers for peace had been conducted. It was also in the Church of the Holy Cross, in 1988, that the ecumenical assembly of the conciliar process for "Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation" took place. That assembly gave forceful impetus to the peaceful revolution. It inspired the many people who went into the streets and demonstrated. Along with political players, they were convinced that just peace is possible. In this way, they transformed the Cold War and the rivalry among superpowers in Europe into the vision of a continent founded on reconciliation and peace, and on sharing a sustainable economic and social development.

That legacy of the WCC, with its member churches being a space to meet over the walls during the Cold War and its history from the end of the Cold War were the background for HH Patriarch Kirill's request to the WCC to take new initiatives for justice and peace. We met in Moscow in October to discuss how the WCC could respond to the crisis in Ukraine and the growing political tensions and divisions between East and West. His Holiness described the suffering of many affected by the

violence in Ukraine, as well as how painful this situation is for the Russian Orthodox Church. We agreed that it would be good to have an ecumenical delegation visiting Ukraine; and, we are working to make that happen in the near future. We also agreed that the WCC should be an instrument to keep lines of communication open between churches and peoples, whatever political situation we find ourselves in, and that the WCC should make every effort to have a nuanced picture of a conflict and promote peaceful initiatives to solve conflicts like this.

5. Follow up of Other Country Priorities in the Last Months

The vision and this movement for just peace and an economy dedicated to life is today more urgent than ever. In what is mentioned, we see that there are many ongoing and urgent issues for the WCC to address in light of the commitment to the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. In the follow up we have been doing in the last months of the country priorities of our strategic plan, we find that walls, fences and deep trenches of hostility divide peoples. It is happening in dramatic ways in Syria and Iraq. We see it in such as at the border between North and South Korea, in Israel and the occupied territories of Palestine, in Nigeria, in South Sudan and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

A small staff team, Peter Prove and Carla Khijoyan, visited Northern Iraq in September, visiting several groups persecuted by ISIS and reporting back particularly the requests from the Christians. This has lead to a focus on three issues: the urgent humanitarian situation that needs to be addressed now, the need for security for many people in the area, and the need for political processes that can stabilize the situation and bring new possibilities to live safely in the country. We have committed ourselves to follow up with churches, interfaith partners, international organizations, representatives of involved countries and others and are discussing plans for another visit. The international society has not been able to establish a UN-based mandate for operations to adequately counter the actions of ISIS, which is regrettable.

Following the assembly, the International Consultation on Justice, Peace and Reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula on 17-19 June 2014 at Bossey gave new impetus to the network of churches and other partners longing for peace and reunification of the Korean peninsula. Taking up the call for the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, the Deutsche Ostasien Mission (DOAM) declared at its 130th anniversary on 17 October in Wittenberg in the presence of representatives of churches in Japan and Korea to intensify the companionship with these churches on a journey of spiritual renewal and a prophetic call for just peace.

Not far from here, there is a well-known and permanent, tragic situation of division, conflict and occupation. Some months ago it again resulted in violence and war in Gaza. Israeli separation wall cuts deep into Palestinian territory, depriving whole villages of their olive trees and fields, and in some cases dividing people from living with their own families. In the shadow of other wars, the situation in the Holy Land requires attention. The new incidents of violence are deeply worrying and are condemned, particularly when they happen in a sanctuary. The frustration of the lack of a peace process leading somewhere and the failing solutions to the root causes of this conflict must be kept in mind whatever happens in this region, the continued illegal occupation and extensions of settlements must be stopped. We continue to monitor the developments closely and to accompany churches and people in their search for a just peace with Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum and the EAPPI programme. In the context of the 5th anniversary of the Kairos declaration, there will be a launching of an initiative of “Kairos for global justice” in December in Bethlehem. Through the Kairos document, Palestinian Christians continue to challenge the churches to stay at their side in their resistance to ongoing occupation and illegal settlements and to do the utmost we can for just peace for all peoples in the region. A good number of WCC member churches are participating in the annual week of solidarity and prayer for peace in Israel and Palestine. Many of our member churches have had vivid and significant discussions of the Kairos document. Many churches offer significant support and are committed to take actions for justice and peace. It is due time that we discuss again, and if possible with fresh perspectives from our pilgrimage, the strategies for our contributions as WCC and member

churches to the just peace needed in that region, and how our programmes and initiatives should develop further. The leadership of the central committee has decided to combine the next meeting in March with a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and to visit the churches in Israel, Palestine and Jordan, as well as our programmes there, the authorities in these countries, as well as leaders of other faith communities and other partners.

As churches on a pilgrimage of justice and peace we need to ask ourselves if we are ready to walk new ways, even to take risks, as we always are searching what will serve our objective: to be on a common journey with all yearning for true justice and peace in the midst of violence and war.
This is also true in many ways for the situation in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The peace negotiations in South Sudan have reached another critical point. IGAD mediators are threatening the two warring parties of President Salva Kiir and his former Deputy President Riek Machar with sanctions if they do not end violence and begin speedy negotiations for a power-sharing agreement. The churches of South Sudan have accompanied the IGAD process ecumenically with the support of member churches in close cooperation between the All Africa Conference of Churches and the WCC, and our colleague Nigussu Legesse has been resilient in his efforts to support them. This critical moment for the country needs our prayers and public witness for peace.

I am glad to report that we are making progress to address the deadly, but often forgotten conflict in the DRC. In June this year, the WCC set up an informal working group of representatives of WCC member churches and representatives of the Eglise du Christ au Congo (ECC). The working group is composed of sub-groups working on the electoral process in the DRC; environmental protection and management of natural resources; gender-based violence and HIV and AIDS; Human rights, political security and humanitarian response; and youth issues. We are supporting these groups in their steps and also trainings in civic education. We have agreed that the WCC will organise an international conference and peace and security in DRC in 2015 in Geneva to foster international attention for the situation in the DRC, to commit all partners to engage in peace-building perhaps in the form of an Ecumenical Forum on DRC modelled after the Sudan Ecumenical Forum), and to encourage participants and others to become international ecumenical observers during the 2016 presidential elections. At the same time, we are continuing to challenge the Kimbanguist Church (Eglise de Jésus-Christ sur la terre par son envoyé spécial Simon Kimbangu - the Church of Christ on Earth through his special envoy Simon Kimbangu) to overcome erroneous positions in their teaching and to find their way back into the fellowship. Our commitment to walk with the churches in the DRC requires more than short term measures of immediate responses to the situation. This will be a longer journey for transformation and change.

Again we have to see that violence disturbs the churches and peoples of Nigeria in a way that particularly hits children and their families. I sent a letter recently to the President of Nigeria expressing the concern for proper security for our member churches and their schools, particularly the Church of Brethren. I also met with the Ambassador in Geneva together with the director of CCIA, Peter Prove, to discuss the matters. The work to establish a joint Christian-Muslim approach to the violence, including the progress to establish a joint centre to monitor and report on violence in the country, was welcomed.

6. Interfaith Summit on Climate Change

The Interfaith Summit on Climate Change (ISCC) (21-22 September 2014) conveyed faith communities' concerns and proposals to the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon who organized a Climate Summit in New York, aiming at catalyzing action by governments, business, finance, industry, and civil society in areas for new commitments and substantial, scalable and replicable contributions that will help the world shift toward a low-carbon economy.

The ISCC was attended by thirty leaders from nine different faith traditions who met with the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to express faith

communities concerns and in panels addressed issues such as: Ethics, Spirituality and Climate Change; Faith Communities, Divestment and Renewable Energy; Climate Resilience: Indigenous Peoples and Other Vulnerable Groups; Intergenerational dimension and youth concerns. More than 300 people registered for the various activities.

The statement adopted by the faith leaders expresses the deep concern they have for the consequences of climate change on the earth and its people acknowledging the overwhelming scientific evidence that climate change is human-induced. They recognize that climate change affects disproportionally the lives livelihoods and rights of the poorer, marginalized and most vulnerable populations including indigenous peoples, becoming an issue of injustice and stress the need of enhanced cooperation of the community of states based on principles of mutual trust, equity, precaution, intergenerational justice and common but differentiated responsibilities.

The Summit received very good media coverage beyond ecumenical news outlets, with articles at HuffPost, in *The Economist* and interviews with Deutsche Welle, Radio France Internationale, etc. I think we have to admit that still more could have been done from our side to make this event and the participants known and heard in this event and in the follow up process. We need to be even more professional in how we plan and pursue the communication part of efforts like this, and the follow up through campaigns etc.

7. The Essentials of Strengthened Relationships with Ecumenical Partners

Our strategic plan identifies the unique role that the WCC is called to play in the one ecumenical movement. Likewise, there is a clear call to closer and stronger working relationships with other ecumenical partners. During the period since the central committee, there has been work and reflection related to strengthening these relationships.

International Consultation on the Relationship between Member Churches and Specialized Ministries (Malawi Consultation)

During recent years there were many instances where concern was raised about the rising tensions within the ecumenical movement between the specialized ministries and churches in different parts of the world. Friction within the ecumenical family borne out of misunderstanding and a break-down of meaningful communication has created situations that led to an estranged relationship where sisters and brothers have spoken ill of each other. The WCC recognized that if such frictions and tensions were left to continue they would not only harm the ecumenical movement but also damage the credibility and cohesive effectiveness of the various actors who are striving to work for justice, peace and life. For this reason, the WCC took the initiative to organize an international consultation which would bring together participants from the WCC member churches, national councils, regional ecumenical organizations, ACT Alliance members from different regions of the world, and representatives from the specialized ministries. Fulfilling its role of convening multiple ecumenical partners, the WCC provided leadership in facilitating a candid conversation on the current contextual realities in which the ecumenical movement exists, thereby enabling the churches and specialized ministries to identify the shared foundations on which they work together as Christian churches and agencies.

The “Malawi Consultation” successfully provided a safe space in which a shared time of mutual questioning, challenging and learning took place. Through the discussions, participants were able to clarify misunderstandings, identify critical challenges, and develop a shared understanding of resources, assets and gifts that would mutually strengthen our common ministries of service and witness. The consultation also led to a mutual recognition of the need to continue working together to further clarify who we are as ecumenical actors in diakonia as well as the value we bring. It noted that the changing funding realities also present a need to identify new ways of resourcing ecumenical diakonia. The Malawi consultation, while building on historical precedents, was mutually affirmed

and acknowledged as the start of what should be a continuing process of mutual conversation, commitment, and cooperative action.

Details of the outcomes can be found in the final report from the Malawi Consultation which is presented to you as a separate document. It is worthy to note that the results of the Malawi Consultation were shared with the members of ACT Alliance during their recent assembly in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, where it was received with much appreciation and referred to on numerous occasions as ACT Alliance was discussing its future work. The follow up of the Malawi consultation will be coordinated through the secretariats of the WCC, LWF and ACT Alliance in order to strengthen the collaboration and cohesiveness of the ecumenical movement in diakonia. A staff working group to discuss together the practical steps in ensuring that we carry through on the various action points that have been agreed in the consultation has been formed with representative staff from the WCC, LWF and ACT Alliance. In 2015, a review will be conducted on the working relationship between the ecumenical organizations, and a study process is being planned which will produce a publishable document on our common understanding of ecumenical diakonia.

2nd General Assembly of ACT Alliance

The links between the WCC and Alliance are much tighter after the 2nd general assembly of the coalition of more than 140 churches and affiliated organisations, held October 20-24 2014. Thanks to the aforementioned process of dialogue and discernment on the relationship between churches and specialized ministries, that was implemented by the two organizations since our 10th Assembly in Busan, we were able to clarify the potential of our common mission and engage in a more proactive strategy under the scope of the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. According to the constitution of ACT Alliance, the WCC is responsible to chair its general assemblies. This is a strong expression of how close we are asked to work together, and I emphasized this in my formal speech to the assembly saying that ACT Alliance represents, as initiative and intention, as well as implementation and institutionalizing of this commitment, an integrated part of the one ecumenical movement. The theme of the ACT Alliance Assembly "Join Hands" had direct links to our Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, especially if we look at it through the lenses of the role of *diakonia* in our life and work. D*iakonia* is precisely the common basis for which the WCC and the ACT Alliance can work together.

Public expressions on the importance of a close collaboration with the WCC also were shared by the ACT Alliance leadership. Rev. Dr Cornelia Füllkrug-Weitzel, moderator of the ACT Alliance between the 1st and the 2nd Assemblies, thanked the WCC for reminding all that both ACT and the WCC are legitimate children of what started in 1925 as the Life and Work movement. "Later, the Life and Work movement became one of the three pillars of the WCC. I am grateful that we share these roots and that we are sisters and brothers and have the same understanding of what is necessary in order to transform and heal the world," said Füllkrug-Weitzel. The same recognition and wish for broader cooperation appeared in the speech of the new moderator, Dr Sushant Agrawal, who thanked the WCC for the support to the Assembly and shared his hope that ACT would engage in a closer walk with the Council.

The Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance

Here I would like to brief report on the process of exploration and dialogue since our summer executive committee meeting, according to the principles we have set together. It has been challenging work; but, we feel that the process is advancing to a positive conclusion.

Structural Matters

The structural framework of an "ecumenical initiative" was clarified and terms of reference for the reference group were drafted to reflect the programmatic integration. It is particularly made clear that programmatic proposals made by the reference group are approved by the executive committee (as an integral part of WCC plans) and that the reference group is appointed by the general secretary.

Programmatic Integration

The WCC Staff Leadership Group had an extensive discussion on whether activities deployed by EAA and the WCC could be seen as complementary. There was a common conviction that there are many ways of doing advocacy and, therefore, complementarity of the two areas of work should be affirmed and be constantly sought. In addition, it was underlined that the structural framework (both activities under the supervision of one AGSP) will encourage and secure common strategies and cooperation.

Financial Perspective

Conditions for the acceptance of EAA as an ecumenical initiative within WCC include the requirement that EAA be in good financial standing at its transfer date, and that there be activity plans for 2015, accompanied by a balanced draft budget. Such plans will be discussed with the reference group.

Forecast 2014 and Corrective Actions

Following WCC's review of EAA's financial forecast 2014, accounting corrections have been made this week to its special project reporting, resulting in the recognition of an estimated deficit of CHF 60,000 for EAA's own project accounts for 2014. On 19 November, EAA has advised WCC that one or more partners are ready to cover the forecast deficit.

Draft Budget 2015

On 19 November, EAA presented a draft budget including pledged contributions of CHF 450,000, unpledged contributions of CHF 110,000 and matching total expenditure of CHF 560,000. EAA considers that the unpledged funding could be raised, in line with forecast contributions of CHF 594,000 for 2014. The draft budget includes 2.4 full-time equivalent staff and CHF 62,000 in direct implementation costs for the two campaigns. In addition to the above, the EAA budget includes income and expenditure of CHF 160,000 for special project work within a consortium with W-YWCA and WCC EHAIA.

Conclusion

The assumption that unpledged contributions of CHF 110,000 could be raised has not been assessed in discussion with WCC colleagues, and at this stage, therefore, the draft budget 2015 is not ready for WCC approval. While EAA has reported that partners are ready to cover any deficit now forecast for 2014, information has been received late, and no written confirmation has reached WCC on 19 November.

The WCC is and should be able to bring together for advocacy different partners as well as different methodologies and complementary initiatives in the ecumenical family. This has been the approach as we have explored the request of integrating of the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance as an "ecumenical initiative."

We see that the international advocacy work of EAA on HIV/AIDS is complementary to the well-established work of EHAIA in its scope and methodology. There is also a growing understanding of how both initiatives can develop in the framework of the WCC, also among the present members of the EAA. As the EHAIA programme is expanding outside Africa, I propose that we designate the EHAIA acronym to mean Ecumenical Initiative on HIV/AIDS in Accompaniment. The emphasis on working with the churches, the people with HIV, and the communities and their leaders are among the most significant assets of this work. It includes accompaniment in advocacy at all levels, also within the churches. The EAA's work on food security can be well integrated with our programme on

Ecology and Economy of Life. The WCC leading staff is able to give proper leadership to this integration.

8. Working Relationship and Closer Cooperation with UNICEF

I am happy to report that we are in the process of establishing a Programme Cooperation Agreement with UNICEF at the global level, for the first time in WCC's history.

Religious leaders and institutions are recognised by UNICEF as an important segment of civil society with a significant potential to advance children's rights.

The planned collaboration builds on the synergies between our Strategic Plan 2014-2017 and UNICEF's strategic plan for social mobilisation through civil society partners.

Many WCC member churches have expressed interest in engaging in child rights, as demonstrated during the 10th Assembly's Ecumenical Conversation on Child Rights. The agreement with UNICEF will enable us to provide support to member churches in responding to child rights violations in their countries and to influence decisions affecting children through international advocacy.

The Cooperation Agreement with UNICEF envisages joint efforts between WCC and UNICEF in the following areas:

1. Engagement of WCC member churches in the "Ending violence against children" campaign and in the "Together for girls" initiative
2. Engagement of WCC member churches in reporting child rights violations observed in their country to the Geneva-based United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, and in advocacy for the implementation of recommendations made by this Committee
3. Response to Ebola: capacity-building of church-based women's groups in Ebola-affected and neighbouring countries for prevention of contamination and to cope with consequences of Ebola on children

In the coming months you will receive detailed information on opportunities for WCC member churches to participate in this collaboration, through the WCC's Special Advisor on Child Rights. Frédérique Seidel has served as manager of the IMD team for some years, and will now continue to develop our advocacy capacities for and the relations to UNICEF.

9. Health and Healing (Special Emphasis on Ebola)

This work has advanced considerably during the months since the last executive committee meeting, demonstrating the Council's efforts to respond to critical human needs as they emerge, continuing in an area of historic work of the churches. There has been work to raise the profile of WCC and to contribute to the international perspective on health and healing issues.

WCC is in full relationship as a non-state actor with WHO since 1976. Relationship is dependent on agreed deliverables deemed beneficial to the pursuance of the global health agenda. It also provides WCC with access to the WHO General Assembly and the ability to bring the voice of the Church Health Institutions and other related health networks, world- wide, under the umbrella of the WCC. It also gives WCC a seat on the executive board of the WHO. We have sought to redeem this relationship through multiple meetings, renegotiating and committing to fulfilling the outstanding obligations through concerted efforts and regular communications with the relevant departments in the WHO. The final decision will be taken at the next WHO executive board meeting in January 2015.

Ebola Crisis

WCC has been proactive in responding to the Ebola crisis and the challenges experienced by the member churches and church health institutions in the affected countries, as well as in reaching out to the UN agencies. Under the active work of Sue Parry, we have been able to deliver several plans and initiatives in the last weeks and months:

- Issuing statements
- Sending a token monetary gift to the Councils of Churches in Liberia and Sierra Leone for training of church leaders on Ebola prevention and messaging
- Hosting a high-level conference in the Ecumenical Centre calling for a global collaborative response to Ebola between WCC and all the UN Agencies, key stakeholders and member churches and church health institutions
- Responding to invitations from senior leadership at WHO(AGS) and UNAIDS to forge relationships for ongoing collaboration
- Sending a WCC representative to a UN consultation on Ebola in Brazzaville
- Sending a communications delegate to the IRCC training in Dakar, Senegal
- Organising a 60 day follow-up consultation to the initial high level meeting (28th Nov)
- Organising a large regional consultation of the senior leadership of church health institutions, councils of churches, member churches, theologians, AACC and AU representatives and the UN agencies to (a) foster regional and national collaboration to Ebola, (b) initiate preparedness in neighbouring vulnerable non-Ebola affected countries, (c) develop theologically sound resource material on Ebola to assist pastors dealing with the impact (Nairobi 24 – 26 Nov)
- Organising a regional consultation of women's group in response to the gender disparities of Ebola infection whereby women are in the forefront as mothers, caregivers, the ones who prepare the bodies for burial, medical staff as nurses, midwives and as general hospital cleaners.
- Documentation and research such as assisting WHO with the development of safe and dignified burial procedure guidelines to address dangerous cultural practices that increased the risk of Ebola contagion.

10. The WCC Coordinating Ecumenical Advocacy

As one of our major tasks in the Pilgrimage is to give leadership to the joint work for Justice and Peace, I am glad to report that there is significant substance in many dimensions of our advocacy work and development as to how the WCC is coordinating and leading this.

My recent visits to New York and Washington DC gave me some clear indications. Our office in New York has in the last year developed significant and strong relations with many UN offices and agencies. When the UN should give information to the new member states of the Security Council, WCC was asked as one of three organizations outside the UN to do so. When the request from the WCC to have a meeting between the Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon proved impossible to honor for the recent visit to New York, because of their clear interest in making these connections, the secretariat immediately offered meetings with the heads of the offices presently working with the secretary general on political issues, climate change, and the Ebola crisis.

The WCC has always had good relations with other partners, NGOs and UN organizations, working for justice and peace for all humanity. This is the case also now in Geneva, in New York, and elsewhere. There is an increasing understanding in many UN offices and agencies that religion is a part of the fabric of society and faith based communities and leaders are present everywhere and often very significantly contributing to the stability, development and wellbeing of people. Unfortunately, there is also a growing image of religion as a source of conflict or as a reason to ignore universal human rights for freedom, even freedom of belief. In this perspective, I see that the WCC with its

member churches and ecumenical partners have a lot of credibility, as well as expectation, to be what we are: a Christian faith-based fellowship, present in many local contexts, but also equipped to act and speak on the behalf of the churches in the common interest of all. The following can serve as one significant example:

When UNICEF celebrated the 25 years of the Convention on the Rights of Children, the WCC was invited for the program and the opening breakfast discussion with some of their partners as the only faith-based organization. After Prof Joseph Stiglitz, a Nobel Prize laureate for economy, had given a thought-provoking exposé on how the costs of inequality for societies are particularly paid by children and described how this is a theme where economy, moral discourse, and theology converge, I was given the floor for a short comment. I affirmed that faith in God as the creator of all must be understood as a basis for the equal rights of all human beings as they are born but also that we believe that God wants to sustain our lives. This is a moral demand to give attention to how the lives of children are sustained and how they get access to proper care in their families, nutrition, education, health service, security and protection. In response, Prof Stiglitz mentioned that the dimension of moral care and love must not be underestimated and that the churches are significant partners for institutions working for economic justice and development. They represent the "disinterested" in the sense that they are not serving their own interests or any particular interest, but the good of all. A better definition of what our advocacy for justice and peace should be we hardly could get.

In the still ongoing peace talks for South Sudan, the connections between our colleague facilitating the participation of the church leaders in the negotiations in Ethiopia and the NY office's access to the Security Council, combined with access to information from other well informed sources, have proven to be very useful.

In the follow up of the important interfaith summit on climate change summarized elsewhere in this report, the WCC has both significant partners, also in the UN, but also significant expectations to what we can deliver. Dr Cynthia Scharf, the special advisor for the secretary general of the UN, clearly expressed her hope that we could facilitate a new approach between Faith and Finance, both "sectors" looking at more long-term perspectives than many politicians do.

In this work on climate change and in other issues we cooperate with and also draw on the human resources and competence of the ACT Alliance and its members. This shows that the relationship between the WCC and the ACT Alliance is absolutely necessary to develop and to strengthen. The coordination must be strengthened both in New York and in Geneva. This is crucial to how we can support what happens elsewhere in the world between the churches, the church-related specialized ministries, and other local, national and global organizations. Our role in developing the capacities of the churches in their advocacy role is quite clear, both in their participation in the programmes of advocacy as well as in our programmes for formation and education. In many countries, the agencies cannot do advocacy work and also for that reason, the churches and their role must be developed and strengthened through the ecumenical fellowship.

The WCC is also serving and, to some extent, coordinating advocacy initiatives with our Regional Ecumenical Organizations (REO) and the National Councils of Churches. This was an issue discussed in the consultation in Malawi in September. Some examples: It is an important dimension in our coordination of the ecumenical response to the Ebola crisis as well as in the cooperation with and support to the reinforcement of the Middle East Council of Churches. It is significant in our cooperation with the Council of Churches in Nigeria, addressing the violence there; and, it is addressed in the New York UN Liaison office. This can be further developed. In my visit to the re-established NCCCUSA in Washington DC this week, I had a long reflection on the cooperation on several issues of advocacy. The North American context is of particular relevance for our work for justice and peace in Israel/Palestine, for the work on mobilization for addressing climate change, for the work on disarmament, etc. Their impressive work to continue to address and combat racism is important for the whole ecumenical family.

In the role of giving leadership to the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, these are significant dimensions of our work: taking new initiatives, give coordination and integrity to the ecumenical work for justice and peace, do properly what only the WCC can do, strengthen the work for justice of the member churches, and cooperate with them, organisations, and others to create momentum and a movement. Focus on our advocacy objectives and determination to achieve them implies that we work with partners and with flexibility. We see that we are able to work both in long-term planning and in addressing new challenges; but, we need to develop our capacities to work in different gears. I am impressed by how colleagues have been able to adjust their work according to how the world and the churches call on our contributions and as we respond to that within the objectives given in our strategic plan.

This requires that we have some flexibility in our budgets, at least in our fundraising capacities for advocacy work. This is the field of our work where the demands are biggest and also where the potential for additional funding is greatest. Under the new leadership of IMD by Douglas Chial, we are continuing to build this capacity, as we strengthen the main lines of funding from the churches and their partners and instruments to do international ecumenical, advocacy and diaconal work.

11. 50 years in the Search for Unity with the Roman Catholic Church

The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) is marking the 50th anniversary of the promulgation of the Decree on Ecumenism of the Vatican Council II *Unitatis Redintegratio* on November 21, 1964. The same day, also the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* and the Decree on the Catholic Eastern Churches *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* were promulgated by the Council. The three together present the ecclesiological vision of the Vatican Council.

With *Unitatis Redintegratio* the Roman Catholic Church was fully committed to the ecumenical movement and formulated a clear vision and appropriate principles for its involvement. Since then, all popes have underlined the irreversible commitment of the Roman Catholic Church to Ecumenism.
We give thanks to God for this breakthrough of 1964 and the progress made since then. I also want to express my deep gratitude to Cardinal Kurt Koch and the members and staff of PCPCU who are gathered for their plenary session in Rome for their excellent cooperation and trust in our relationships. From our side, we want to strengthen this cooperation even further through the Faith and Order Commission, the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, close collaboration in service and public witness and, of course, the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC. One of the precious instruments of our cooperation and the promotion of ecumenism is and will remain the *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity*.

Pope Francis said on November 20 in his speech to the PCPCU plenary: *"In these months, meeting so many non-Catholic Christians, or reading their letters, I have been able to see how, despite open questions that still separate us, there is a widespread and strong desire to walk together, to pray, to know and love the Lord, to collaborate in service and solidarity with the weak and the suffering. I am convinced of this: in a common journey, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and learning from one another we can grow in the communion that already unites us."*

These sentences resonate with his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*; they resonate too with the assembly *Unity Statement* and the call to join in a *Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace*. Both want us to be agents of unity for the church and humanity, to walk together in our life journeys, and to deepen our spiritual life and to strengthen our common witness together. Prayer and shared spiritual life must be the heartbeat of everything we do in the pilgrimage so that our common witness is rooted in faith and credible as an expression of our common vision for the world.

Here, I wish to express gratitude for the PCPCU's continued financial support of a faculty position at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey.

12. The Reception of the Faith and Order Document "The Church"

I see this as a promising way forward, especially in times when we are challenged in many ways to reconsider the goal of visible unity. I trust that the Faith and Order document on *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* can also help us in this process. It was a great achievement that the Faith and Order Commission adopted it as a convergence document – the second only after Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry.

Since the launching of document at the WCC executive committee in March, 2013, the text has been translated into 17 languages (that we know of); it has been published into 10 languages. Fifty one churches have reported that they are beginning to prepare formal responses to the text. Seven CWCs are promoting the text among their member churches. Fifteen councils of churches are preparing responses to the text. There are eleven instances where churches are using the text in their bilateral dialogues with one another. We have found 3 study guides online. It is being used in 33 faculties of theology and seminaries. These are just some of the indicators of how the text is being used at this time.

13. Inter-religious Dialogue and Cooperation

During the last few months, the WCC has engaged in bilateral dialogue with Jewish leaders; among the topics of conversation was the importance of Israel for the Jewish people and of Jerusalem for Christians. Partly as a result of developments over the summer we are working to produce two papers which will seek to set out in a reflective and systematic manner our views on anti-Semitism and Islamophobia respectively. Work has already begun on the paper on anti-Semitism; that on Islamophobia will begin in the New Year. These two papers will be complemented by reflection on the situation of Christian minorities, especially in vulnerable geographical and political contexts, and by a conference which is being planned to mark the 50th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate* which will explore the question of religious fundamentalism. A working title for this conference is: "Beyond Fundamentalisms: Confronting Extremism through Dialogue."

14. Update on the New Center for Work and Witness in International Geneva

Just last week, on 10 November 2014, *LRS architectes* completed the Area Development Plan for *Green Village*, filing it on our behalf at the Geneva office of town planning. The Area Development Plan includes all the information required for consideration by the authorities, and is accompanied by studies on the approach to protection of the environment, on the expected impact on traffic of the project and an energy study. The documents will now be subject to formal review, and the expectation is that in about 18 months, by June 2016, the Area Development Plan will be approved.

While we are glad that this step forward has now been taken, we have to observe that there has been some delay compared to the plan reviewed at central committee; we had expected that the Area Development Plan might have been filed already with the authorities in July. During the summer, a delay of two months ensued while we addressed an unexpected request from a newly appointed State Councillor to increase the proportion of apartments in the project. Then, in the early autumn, the architects worked to adjust the position on the plans of one building close to the protected garden, following recommendations from the director of the Geneva department of heritage. During the preparation of the Area Development Plan, *Implenia*, our development partners, and our staff have worked in meetings with the different state representatives and other parties in a consultative process which should now prove helpful as the formal state review process begins. Meanwhile, on our neighbouring site, we understand that there has been satisfactory negotiation with a local residents' association objecting to that particular development because of increased traffic, and that, after a two-year delay, construction works may commence there in summer 2015.

More information on the Area Development Plan, the impact studies and the project timeline are included as an appendix to this report.

15. Conclusion

The staff of the WCC is our most valuable resource. This is true now as before. After some months to recover from the great efforts to prepare and have the assembly, and then to prepare new plans, budgets, objectives, and the first central committee meeting after the assembly, we have had a very good period of work after the summer break. I feel the support from and the good cooperation with staff and among staff. There are always some changes and some challenges for those who are responsible for the staff of an organization; and, we have limited financial resources.
We are these days finalizing the work on the revision of our regulations, based on the rules that the executive committee updated and adjusted recently. This happens with significant contributions from and good cooperation with the Staff Representative Group, the Human Resources office, and the deputy general secretary.

We say thanks to staff colleagues that are coming to the end of their service to the council, for their contributions and their commitment. I am very grateful to those who are making themselves available to use their time and skills in the service to the WCC, those who continue in their roles or with new responsibilities, and those who are have recently joined. Details will be shared in a closed session. All should and could be mentioned. Let me in this context, extend thanks to those who have left or are leaving their service in these last months.

- Rev. Sabine Udodesku
- Dr Mathews George
- Ms Fiona Rheme
- Ms Lut Van Kersavond
- Ms Maria Paz Gimenez
- Mr Christian Von Arx
- Ms Christelle Genoud
- Ms Corinne Ott
- Ms Tara Tautari
- Mr Mark Beach
- Mr Louis-Blaise Nzonzi
- Mr Alain Meuwly
- Rev. Canon Dr John Gibaut
- Mr Jonathan Frerichs
- Ms Christina Papazoglou

As I embark on my second term, I am inspired by the support of the governing bodies and the colleagues. I feel and believe that the WCC now has a period of determined and committed work ahead of us, based on the mandate given to us by the assembly and the central committee. I thank particularly the members of the staff leadership group and the general secretariat for their strong efforts, and extend the same to all colleagues in different positions. The cooperation with the Moderator, Dr Agnes Abuom, is very constructive and helpful. Also in your personal sorrow, we have seen your strong human and spiritual strength. I thank the whole group of the leadership of the central committee for the way we share the tasks and the joy of those tasks given to us.

We are moving together, thankful for the ministry we have been called to, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

General Secretary Visits and Meetings from 14 July to 20 November 2014

TRAVEL:

DATE	PLACE	PURPOSE
14-17 July	South Africa	General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church of South Africa
8 September	Antwerp, Belgium	Sant'Egidio community's 28th International Meeting of People and Religions
17-18 September	Norway	Rainforest Conference Ministry of Foreign Affairs
19-23 September	United States of America	Interfaith Climate Change Summit
9-10 October	Russia	Visit with Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill
18-26 October	Dominican Republic	ACT-Alliance Assembly
27 October	United Kingdom	WCC-IJCIC Meeting
30 October-2 November	Norway	Mission Conference
3 November	Netherlands	Meeting of the CWC Secretaries
17-19 November	United States of America	Meetings with UNICEF and other UN and governmental agencies

MEETINGS:

DATE	PLACE	PURPOSE
1 August	Ecumenical Centre	Visit of His Holiness Pope Tawadros of the Coptic Orthodox Church
2 August	World Council of Churches	Visit of Mr Luis Samacumbi from Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola
5 September	World Council of Churches	Msgr Milenge and delegation from Eglise du Christ au Congo
10 September	World Council of Churches	Visit of Armenian Church representative in Geneva
10 September	Norway Mission	Meeting with Norway Ambassador to the UN - HE Steffen KONGSTAD
10 September	World Council of Churches	Visit of Bishop Martin Lind, bishop of the Lutheran Church in Great Britain
10-12 September	Ecumenical Centre	Visit of Church of Norway Delegation
12 September	Ecumenical Centre	Welcome new Bossey students
24 September	World Council of Churches	Meeting with EAA Leadership
25 September	World Council of Churches	Meeting with Mariah Levin, Senior Community Manager, Civil Society Global Leadership Fellow of the World Economic Forum
26 September	World Council of Churches	Meeting with Sudan Council of Churches GS and NCA
26 September	WHO	Meeting with Dr Silberschmidt - WHO Deputy Director
26 September	World Council of Churches	Visit of Church of Sweden delegation
29 September	World Council of	Health and Healing Seminar

	Churches	
29 September	Geneva	Nansem Refugees Award
30 September	Geneva	Official visit of H.E. Thorhild Widvey, Norway Minister of Culture and delegation from Ministry of Culture and Church of Norway
1 October	Ecumenical Institute Bossey	Lunch with World Vision for World Day of Prayer
1 October	World Council of Churches	Visit of Jørn Lemvik, General Secretary DIGNY
1 October	World Council of Churches	Visit of Bishop Lawson, Methodist Church Togo
2-3 October	World Council of Churches	Staff Planning Days
2 October	WHO	Meeting with Dr Fukuda, ADG for Health Security at WHO
2 October	World Council of Churches	Visit of HE Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, former head of the UN in Geneva and presently Head of the Secretariat of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, Chairperson of the Senate of Kazakhstan and Kazakhsan Ambassador
6 October	World Council of Churches	Visit of OKR Detlev Knoche and Delegation from Protestant Church Hesse & Nassau
6 October	World Council of Churches	Visit of Bishop Simo Peura, Bishop of Lapua and member of the WCC Executive Committee and delegation from FinnChurch Aid
15 October	World Council of Churches	Visit of Rev. Christopher Ferguson, General Secretary WCRC
15 October	World Council of Churches	Meeting of New Financial Architecture Panel (Rev. Ferguson, Rev. Junge GS LWF, Rev. Colin Cowen, GS Council for World Mission and WCC GS)
28-29 October	World Council of Churches	LCC Meeting
30 October	World Council of Churches	Meeting with Rev. Dr Susan Durber, Faith and Order Commission Moderator
2 November	Ecumenical Centre	Presentation of book ***Never Bow to Racism*** - Memoirs of Baldwin Sjollema
5 November	World Council of Churches	Meeting with World Vision Leadership
5 November	World Council of Churches	Meeting with Ms Wakil and Mr Azar of WSCF Middle East
6 November	World Council of Churches	Meeting with Rt. Rev. Father Housig Mardirossian, Ecumenical Offier Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Cilicia)
11 November	Ecumenical Institute Bossey	Dinner with Reference Group on Human Sexuality
13 November	Geneva	Farewell dinner with Rev. Dr Guy Liagre, GS of CEC
14 November	Nigeria Mission	Visit to Ambassador S.E. M. Umunna Humphrey ORJIAKO
14 November	World Council of Churches	Visit of Rev. Larry Miller, Global Christian Forum
14 November	Ecumenical Centre	Visit of Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark Bishops and delegation

Update on the WCC building development project

On 10 November 2014, the World Council of Churches' Area Development Plan (ADP) for *Green Village* was filed with the Geneva department of town planning. The ADP, and the required accompanying impact studies, will now be subject to formal review by the responsible authorities, with the expectation that approval will be issued in June 2016.

Extract from WCC's ADP for *Green Village*, with references noted for buildings

A: Offices and Chapel 4,245 sqm
B: Ecumenical Centre offices 7,935 sqm
C: Offices for WCC's tenants 12,640 sqm
D: Offices and commercial area 9,040 sqm
E: Offices 13,990 sqm
F: Apartments 6,010 sqm
G: Hotel-residence 7,840 sqm
Car park spaces: 680 spaces

ADP: definition and process selected for its development

The ADP defines the volumes of the buildings, the designation of each building, the global gross floor surface per designation, the layout of the estate, including access, car parks, foot paths, cycle paths, emergency service access and energy requirements. The ADP has been developed through a consultative process with the authorities, as outlined in the report to central committee in July 2014. *Implenia* and *LRS architectes* have met regularly with state representatives in the department of town planning, department of transport, departments on environmental matters and the heritage department, with the objective of taking account of their views and recommendations while preparing the document. In addition, there has been consultation with the Commune of Grand-Saconnex, as well as the Grand-Saconnex residents' group, Radar, which opposed the *Global Fund* ADP on the neighbouring plot.

Outcomes from the consultative process

A number of recommendations were addressed during the consultative process. Of these, the most significant was a recommendation from the director of the heritage department, who advised that the positioning of building D be adjusted by about two metres to the northeast. In the first plans submitted, it encroached on the *Brugger* garden, which was to be preserved. *LRS architectes* adapted the plans, reaching a satisfactory outcome by rotating building D by 90°.

Environmental impact assessment

The environmental impact study covers air and noise pollution, protection of water, flora and fauna and measures planned during demolition and construction. Observations raised by the study include the following:

- Air pollution in the form of atmospheric particulates, PM10, is expected to decrease by 67% in the district; the new Route des Nations, with an underground tunnel, expected to be opened in 2019, and a new tram line expected in 2021, will more than offset any adverse impact to air pollution from increased traffic on the WCC site;
- According to the regulations, the project includes the plan systematically to replace trees and vegetation to be cut down as a result of the development, and the creation of a pond to contain rainwater in case of heavy rains. In this regard, the project is considered overall to have a positive impact with regard to protection of nature; and
- No negative environmental impact was identified, for which a compensating or corrective measure had not been, or could not be, found.

Energy study

The energy study assesses the advantages and disadvantages with regard to both potential financial cost and ecological sustainability of three different energy strategies for the site:

(i) Use of the existing gas heating system, and in addition solar panels to produce at least 30% of the hot water required;
(ii) Ground source heat pumps, with some electricity production from photovoltaic panels; or
(iii) Connection to the hydrothermal network named Genève-Lac-Nations ("GLN"), which might be extended to the site; GLN pumps water at 37m depth from the Lake of Geneva and onward to sub-stations, and is now heating about 20 buildings in the international district.

Strategies (ii) and (iii) are considered the most interesting from the environmental perspective, but could be implemented with elements of (i). Decision will also depend on other developments, including whether GLN is to be extended for the new neighbouring project for the *Global Fund*.

Traffic study

The traffic study confirms that the number of car park spaces proposed is as defined by the current Geneva regulations related to the designated use of the buildings, and their floor space.

Additional car park spaces:	Number
For employees	120
For visitors	165
For residents	99
Total additional spaces	**384**
Existing spaces	296
Total spaces	**680**

To promote use of cycles, 484 bicycle parking places are planned, rather than the 228 places which would be required by regulations.

The Route de Ferney at present carries 22,000 vehicles/day, and nearly 2,000 vehicles/hour during peak times, approaching saturation at two junctions. This is to change from 2019, when the new Route des Nations should carry traffic from France and the motorway to the international sector. The Route de Ferney will then become a secondary route, with a new tramline expected in 2021.

The study considers that traffic from the first phase of construction will not have an adverse impact because of the opening of the new Route des Nations, while in the second phase of construction, the new tramline will create a positive impact, increasing the capacity to absorb additional traffic. In the final phase, it is estimated that the project will generate 1,670 additional vehicles/day, with 190 vehicles/day at peak times. To limit adverse impact in the final phase, the study notes that initiatives are in progress to encourage car-pooling in the international sector.

Project timeline

As reported July 2014	*Revised timeline*	
Project phase 2		
Mid-July 2014	10 November 2014	Deliver the Area Development Plan (ADP)
January 2016	June 2016	Approval of ADP
Project phase 3		
December 2016	June 2017	Building permits
Project phases 4 and 5		
November 2016	May 2017	Define financial objectives of each building, as preparation for the investor selection process
December 2016	June 2017	Launch invitation to tender for investors, for sale of building (s)
Project phase 6		
December 2018	June 2019	Delivery of first building

The *Global Fund* project on the neighbouring plot was delayed by over two years following residents' objections to the traffic impact. Following negotiation and an agreed reduction in the number of car park spaces, it is now expected that construction works will begin on the neighbouring plot in summer 2015.

Given delay now inherent in the project timeline, WCC will study with Implenia and other advisers the approach to be adopted from March 2017, when it is likely that the existing loan will require to be extended for one to two years. Possible solutions will be raised for consideration by the steering committee in the first quarter 2015.

APPENDIX IV: POLICY FOR REIMBURSEMENT OF TRAVEL COSTS FOR WCC GOVERNING, CONSULTATIVE AND ADVISORY BODIES

Participation of the member churches is fundamental to all aspects of the work of the WCC. Such participation can be facilitated by the WCC secretariat through financial assistance (or reimbursements for costs incurred) for representatives of churches with limited means.

I. Principles

1. The purpose of the policy is to ensure accountability and transparency both in the principles which apply for reimbursement of travel costs, and in the implementation of those principles.

2. When a representative of a WCC member church is elected to a governing body, consultative body or advisory group, or is nominated as an assembly delegate, the member church is in principle responsible for all travel, board and lodging costs incurred as a result of the participation of the representative. For the purposes of this policy, consultative bodies and advisory groups are defined as those bodies or groups in which representatives of a member church have been appointed by decision of central committee or executive committee.

3. If a church cannot cover some or all of these costs, then a request in writing from the church should be sent to the WCC.

4. Member churches may be granted reimbursement of the travel and accommodation costs ("reimbursements") of their representatives when attending meetings of WCC governing bodies, consultative bodies and advisory groups.

5. Except for the assembly, reimbursements are granted on the condition that the church's membership contribution for the previous year has been paid at least two full months prior to the event concerned. For assembly, reimbursements are granted on the condition that the church's membership contribution is paid for at least the three consecutive years prior to the year of the assembly.
6. Requests are considered in the spirit of solidarity and sharing, with attention both to the particular circumstances of the member church, and to the relevant budget approved by executive committee. For example, where very long distance travel is concerned, a church may send a written request concerning the difference between the cost of the long distance air ticket, and the average air ticket cost for attendance at central committee[1]. Another church may request reimbursement of the air ticket and accommodation costs, while confirming coverage of visa and local public transport to the airport.

7. For the purpose of reimbursement eligibility, at least the minimum annual membership contribution of CHF 1,000 [2] must have been paid.

8. Membership contributions from a church and reimbursements of costs for participation of the church in a meeting must be kept separate. Specifically, when the membership contribution has not been paid, a claim for reimbursement cannot be accepted together with the request that part of the reimbursement value be credited to membership contributions, instead of being received by the church as a reimbursement.

[1] Average cost based on WCC conference office records for the most recent central committee
[2] While the minimum membership remains CHF 1,000, for the purposes of implementation of this policy, USD 1,000 will also be interpreted as fulfilling the criteria, as will a variance of up to CHF 100 resulting from foreign exchange differences on conversion to Swiss francs and/or bank transfer fees

9. In cases where member church representatives do not attend a full meeting, reimbursement of costs will be pro-rated according to the number of days attended, unless such limited attendance has been agreed in advance.

10. If a reimbursement for the cost of members' travel to meetings of the central and executive committees, consultative bodies or advisory groups is granted, arrangements should be made through the WCC conference office. In cases where the member makes the travel arrangements locally and reimbursement is requested, the amount of reimbursement should, without exception, be limited to the equivalent cost of that which would have been incurred had travel been arranged by WCC. Consultation with WCC conference office should be made in advance to agree the amount to be reimbursed.

11. Requests for exceptions to this policy may be granted at the discretion of the general secretary if they are submitted in writing prior to the event concerned. Exceptions granted will only be valid for the meeting concerned by the request.

12. Exceptions granted to this policy for one meeting shall be reported by the general secretary to the subsequent meeting of the executive committee.

II. Eligible travel and accommodation costs

1. The rules in this section apply for all travel undertaken at the request of WCC, including participation at WCC governing, consultative and advisory bodies, but also reimbursement requests for participation in other meetings, such as ad hoc groups formed by the general secretary, reference groups and programme meetings.

2. The WCC will be responsible only for the cost of a direct flight from the airport of departure from the person's country of residence to Geneva (or other location, if the meeting is held elsewhere) and return, without stopovers, unless a break is required because the length of the trip exceeds 18 hours. The WCC will pay the cost of a ticket, prepaid or sent from Geneva, or the cost of a ticket purchased locally by the individual or the church, whichever is less.

3. Flights arranged by the WCC will be by the least expensive routing, and taking advantage of any special fares or deductions available to the WCC. Members will not be asked to take a special routing if the saving is less than CHF 500.00 or when the inconvenience is unreasonable i.e.
    - when travel time each way exceeds 24 hours more than the direct routing;
    - when the alternate route requires more than two connections over and above the direct route.

4. If special routing or stopovers are required, or if the person makes his or her own arrangements, the WCC will reimburse only an amount equal to the lowest cost as indicated above.

5. Members will seek to reduce costs to the WCC whenever possible. It is understood that members who are able to combine a trip with travel to other meetings will share expenses with the other organisations so as to reduce costs to the WCC.

6. WCC authorised travel will be by economy class (air) or second class including sleeper for overnight travel (rail).

7. When a ticket has been purchased locally on authorisation of the WCC, reimbursement will be made on presentation of an invoice or the ticket.

8. Other expenses necessarily incurred in the course of travel will also be reimbursed, as follows, and on the basis of invoices or receipts:

- moderately priced second-class hotels, excluding any personal charges or private telephone charges;
- local public transport or taxis as needed;
- the hiring of cars will not be reimbursed, except if prior clearance has been obtained;
- porter's charges, required airport taxes, visas, inoculations etc.
- other unavoidable costs in cases of emergency such as flight cancellations, strikes etc.

9. Personal expenses are not reimbursed.

10. All expense reports must include the currency and rate of exchange, with exchange receipts attached.

11. No reimbursements in cash on site will be made, except in special circumstances communicated ahead of time to the WCC conference office, or other WCC desk organising the meeting concerned. Reimbursements will normally be made by bank transfer, with any bank transfer charges at the cost of the WCC.

APPENDIX V: ACTIONS ON PUBLIC ISSUES

The following three documents were submitted to and adopted by the executive committee at its meeting, 21 – 26 November, 2014:

A. Statement on Forced Displacement, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Middle East
B. Statement on Procedures for Dealing with Public Issues Revised
C. Minute on Racial Tensions in the United States of America

A. FORCED DISPLACEMENT, REFUGEES AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPS) IN THE MIDDLE EAST

So you also must love outsiders. Remember that you yourselves were outsiders in Egypt. (Deuteronomy 10:19, NIRV)

Christians are called by scripture and our faith to respond to the situation of refugees, displaced people and those fleeing violence and oppression.

Our Lord Jesus Christ himself became, in his infancy, a child refugee when "*an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt*".[3]

Jesus' ministry is an example and invocation to welcome, hospitality, inclusion, and service to all. Jesus identified himself especially with the outsider and the dispossessed, and taught his followers that when they fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, welcomed the stranger, clothed the naked, and visited the sick and those in prison, they were doing it to him. When they failed to do so, they failed to serve him.[4]

In December 2012, UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres convened a Dialogue with faith leaders, faith-based humanitarian organizations, academics and government representatives from countries around the world on the theme of "Faith and Protection." As the High Commissioner noted in his opening remarks, "…all major religious value systems embrace humanity, caring and respect, and the tradition of granting protection to those in danger. The principles of modern refugee law have their oldest roots in these ancient texts and traditions." As an outcome of this event, faith-based organizations – including the World Council of Churches – collaborated in drafting "Welcoming the Stranger: Affirmations for Faith Leaders" to help inspire religious leaders to "welcome the stranger" with dignity, respect and loving support.

The world is currently experiencing a crisis of forced displacement unprecedented in the modern era, with over 50 million people now living as refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs) globally. On average, more than 30,000 people are fleeing from their homes every single day due to conflict or other causes of insecurity. While media attention and humanitarian financing is relatively easier to attract during emergencies, refugee and displacement situations invariably last much longer than the emergencies. The average amount of time a refugee spends in exile and uncertainty is 17 years.

The Middle East region is at the epicentre of the worst forced displacement crisis in a generation. In particular, the brutal and intractable conflict in Syria has generated massive population displacement

[3] Matthew 2:13-15
[4] Matthew 25:31-45

from and within the country. Over 3 million Syrians – half of them children – have been forced to flee their country, while another 7.6 million people are displaced within Syria.

In Iraq, the paroxysm of violence in mid-2014 in which the so-called 'Islamic State' swept across the north of the country drove fresh waves of displacement, in a country with almost a million existing IDPs who had fled violence in previous years. More than 800,000 newly displaced people sought safety in the Kurdistan region, where a WCC staff delegation visited in August 2014. The WCC delegation brought back first-hand testimonies from members of the displaced communities – Christians, Yazidis and Muslim groups – targeted by the extremists. The delegation observed the overwhelming numbers of people being cared for by the regional authorities, churches and other religious or social institutions, or staying in construction sites, in tents, or in the open, often facing a harsh winter without adequate shelter or clothing. An estimated total of 1.9 million Iraqis have been internally displaced so far this year. Meanwhile, the north of Iraq received a further surge in the numbers of Syrians fleeing Kobane in Syria, via Turkey, adding to the 214,000 Syrian refugees already in Iraq, mostly in the Kurdistan region.

In these and other situations in the region, religious and social diversity is gravely and dramatically jeopardized, and Christians are among those especially affected. Christians are indigenous to the Middle East, having been present since the dawn of Christianity. Their continued presence is essential for the maintenance of diversity and pluralism in the social fabric of the region also in the future.
The exceptionally large new refugee outflows especially from Syria have put the social, political, economic and security situation in neighbouring countries in severe peril. Nevertheless, particularly Lebanon and Jordan, as well as Turkey and Iraq, have demonstrated generosity in receiving and assisting the Syrian refugees.

Lebanon has received more than 1.5 million Syrian refugees, increasing its population by one quarter and giving it the highest concentration of refugees per capita in the world. In Jordan, the Zaatari refugee camp has grown to become the country's third largest 'city'. While offering exceptional hospitality to refugees and displaced people, host communities in these countries are experiencing great stress and hardship in doing so. The health, education and other social services available in Lebanon and Jordan cannot meet the overwhelming needs of citizens and refugee populations combined. The Middle East Council of Churches, ACT Alliance and its members, together with local churches and humanitarian organizations, are deeply engaged in responding to these situations, but additional international support is critically needed to help meet the vast unmet need.

In these circumstances, it is often children who suffer the consequences. For example, while both Lebanon and Jordan have in principle allowed Syrian refugees to access health and education services, due to lack of needed resources and inadequate infrastructure less than 20% of the refugee children in Lebanon actually attend school, and the additional burden on the education system in Jordan has put it under severe strain.

The burden being borne by these countries is unsustainable and unjust, and this injustice compounds the tragedy of the displaced people and communities. The international community must exert maximum efforts to promote a just resolution of the situations of conflict and oppression driving the population displacements in order to ensure a sustainable peace, and to enable refugees and IDPs to return to their homes should they wish to do so. In the meantime, opportunities for refugees to be resettled elsewhere have in practice been minimal. In the past 2 years, fewer than 150,000 refugees have been resettled in other countries.

Faced with the overflow of refugees and displaced persons in the neighbouring host countries, and with the slow and woefully inadequate response of wealthier states outside the region, the desperate are increasingly driven into the hands of people smugglers. More and more of those with the means to pay the smugglers' exorbitant demands are putting their lives at terrible risk for even the slimmest chance of a brighter future.

In addition, especially in the context of the Syria crisis, displacement and the risk of statelessness for refugee children are inextricably linked. Children can only acquire nationality through their fathers under current Syrian law, but many Syrian refugee children have been separated from their fathers due to the conflict. Additionally, many Syrian refugee children fled the country before ever having obtained documentation proving that they are Syrian nationals. Unless this can be resolved at a later date, these children may be left stateless. There are also very low levels of birth registration among Syrian refugee children born in exile in the main host countries, now numbering over 70,000. Without birth registration, it becomes difficult for them to prove that they have acquired nationality by descent from a Syrian father.

For children, statelessness brings with it special risks and vulnerabilities. While every child is entitled to official protection against exploitation and abuse, stateless children have no such guarantee. Lack of documents proving nationality and age leaves them without adequate legal protection, and at particular risk of trafficking for economic and sexual exploitation, forced marriage and forced labour.

The recent developments in Syria and Iraq have added to the existing long-term forced displacement crisis in the wider Middle East. In Israel-Palestine, the Israeli military operation in the Gaza Strip in July 2014 caused the biggest wave of displacement and the highest number of civilian casualties since 1967. Displacement has also continued in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, where the policies and practices of occupation (including restrictive and discriminatory residency regulations and construction policies) and settlement expansion continue to cause the systematic and definitive displacement of an increasing number of people.

There are around 2 million UNRWA[5]-registered Palestinian refugees in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and 3 million Palestinian refugees in the surrounding countries of Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. For Palestinians, refugee status is passed down from one generation to the next.

The WCC executive committee is meeting in Cyprus, one of the sites of the earliest Christian outreach beyond the Holy Land, but a place with its own painful modern history of conflict, displacement, occupation and division. As consequences of this, as many as 200,000 Greek Cypriots and 65,000 Turkish Cypriots were displaced, many churches and communities were destroyed or abandoned, and at least 1,600 people remain missing and unaccounted for. And today a still divided Cyprus stands at the very edge of the region bearing the heaviest burden of the current global crisis of forced displacement.

Concerned for the future of the displaced people and for the stability of the societies of the region, the executive committee of the World Council of Churches:

- ***Expresses*** appreciation to the governments and authorities of neighbouring host countries, especially Lebanon and Jordan, for keeping their borders open to those fleeing conflict and oppression.
- ***Calls on*** other countries urgently to increase their financial and material support to host country governments and to local and international efforts to care for and to protect the refugees and displaced persons, sharing the burden more equitably with the most affected host countries and communities.
- ***Urges*** all parties to the conflicts driving the destruction and displacement in Syria, Iraq and Israel-Palestine to respect the dignity and rights of all human beings, to observe all the principles of international humanitarian law concerning the protection of civilians, and to bring an end to these conflicts and injustices so that refugees and displaced people may return to their homes in conditions of safety and dignity.
- ***Stresses*** the critical importance of securing the conditions under which the Christian presence can be strengthened in the Middle East region, with due protection of the rights and dignity of

[5] United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

all, as a foundation for pluralism and democratic and social development in the societies of the region.

- ***Appeals*** to WCC member churches and partners to support local churches in their efforts to provide the means of survival for vulnerable communities affected by the conflicts in Syria and Iraq.
- ***Requests*** all potential resettlement countries to increase and expedite their intake of refugees, in order to mitigate the long-term impact on the lives and livelihoods of the victims of forced displacement and on the societies and economies of the most affected host countries.
- ***Calls on*** the international humanitarian community and the authorities of the host countries to redouble their efforts to avoid statelessness among the refugee populations, particularly among children, including by simplifying registration procedures and documentation requirements for substantiating identity and marriage.
- ***Underlines*** the need for stronger national and international collaborative efforts for the more effective protection of refugees and displaced persons.
- ***Recommends*** that all states that have not already done so sign, ratify and implement the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1954 and 1961 Statelessness Conventions.
- ***Urges*** all political leaders from both Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities to overcome hostilities, divisions and injustices and to bring negotiations on the future of Cyprus to a successful and just conclusion, as an essential foundation for sustainable peace and development.
- ***Encourages*** religious leaders from both communities in their efforts (through the 'Religious Track' of the Cyprus Peace Process) to continue inter-religious and inter-communal reconciliation and cooperation for peace, justice and respect for the human and religious rights of all people in Cyprus and to provide a sign of hope to the wider region, and invites all WCC member churches to support and accompany them in prayer and solidarity.
- ***Invites*** all churches and Christians to deepen their reflection on the Christian calling to welcome the stranger, and to widen the care they provide for those in need, making use of and promoting the resource "Welcoming the Stranger: Affirmations for Faith Leaders".

B. PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH PUBLIC ISSUES REVISED

Excerpt from WCC Constitution and Rules (as amended by 10th Assembly, Busan, 2013)

Rule XII. Public statements

1. In the performance of its functions, the WCC through its Assembly or through its central committee may issue statements on any situation or concern with which the Council or its constituent churches may be confronted.
2. While such statements may have great significance and influence as the expression of the judgment or concern of so widely representative a Christian body, yet their authority will consist only in the weight which they carry by their own truth and wisdom, and the publishing of such statements shall not be held to imply that the Council as such has, or can have, any constitutional authority over the constituent churches or right to speak for them.
3. Any commission [i.e. including CCIA] may recommend statements to the assembly or to the central committee for its consideration and action.
4. When, in the judgement of a commission, a statement should be issued before approval of the assembly
or central committee can be obtained, the commission may do so provided the statement relates to matters within its own field of concern and action, has the approval of the moderator of the central committee and the general secretary, and the commission makes clear that neither the WCC nor any of its member churches is committed by the statement.
5. Between meetings of the central committee, when in their judgement the situation requires, a statement may be issued, provided that such statements are not contrary to the established policy of the Council, by:

(a) the executive committee when meeting apart from the sessions of the central committee; or
(b) the moderator and vice-moderator/s of the central committee and the general secretary acting together; or
(c) the moderator of the central committee or the general secretary on his or her own authority respectively.

Introduction

A public statement/minute by the central committee is only one among many ways in which public issues can be addressed. And as the above provisions make clear, the central committee is only one authority – if the leading one – that can exercise the public witness/advocacy role of the WCC/ecumenical movement between assemblies. This role can also be exercised by the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (and other commissions), executive committee, and moderator/vice-moderators/general Secretary. *[WCC Constitution and Rules, Rule XII. 4-5]*.

In any event, public statements/minutes should not be seen as an end in themselves, but rather as a strategic element of a coherent and collective ecumenical engagement with the issues and situations addressed. Absent a clear commitment and capacity for follow-up action by member churches (at least with regard to effective distribution of the statement/minute to the constituencies most affected), the utility of issuing a statement/minute should be queried.

Current procedures for dealing with public issues through the central committee date from 1985-1989. Revision of these procedures is required in the light of constitutional and organizational developments in the meantime (including amendment of constitution by 10th Assembly), especially with regard to the frequency of central committee meetings *[as per WCC Constitution and Rules, Rule VI, para 4(a)]*, as well as to ensure quality and effectiveness of statements/minutes produced.

In light of:

- the provisions of Rule XII of the WCC Constitution and Rules (as amended by 10th Assembly, Busan, 2013) concerning public statements:
- the reduced frequency of central committee meetings under the amended Constitution *[WCC Constitution and Rules, Rule VI, para 4(a)]*; and
- the need for the quality, authority and effectiveness of public statements/minutes issued by the Central Committee to be assured through an appropriate process and period of research, consultation and drafting;

the following procedures are to be observed.

_____

Procedures

1. Texts for consideration by the central committee for approval as statements or minutes on public issues should be based on impulses from member churches *[WCC Constitution and Rules, Rule VI, para 5 (c)]* and/or from the commissions (especially the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs) *[WCC Constitution and Rules, Rule XII, para 3]*.

2. Texts for such statements/minutes should be developed through a process of research and consultation between the general secretariat and relevant member churches, commissions and other stakeholders/partners.

3. The resulting draft statements/minutes, after review by the WCC staff leadership group (SLG), shall be circulated to central committee members well in advance of the next scheduled meeting (together with a clear rationale for action by the central committee and any other necessary background materials), and reactions invited.

4. The public issues committee (PIC) will, in accordance with its prescribed mandate [WCC Constitution and Rules, Rule X.7], receive, discuss and finalize such drafts for action by the central committee, taking into account any reactions received from central committee members.

5. Situations requiring a more immediate public response should generally be addressed by other forums or instruments of the WCC able to react in an appropriately timely manner [CCIA, executive committee, Moderator/Vice-Moderators/General Secretary].

6. In case of emergent circumstances and situations arising immediately before or during meetings of the central committee which are considered to warrant a public statement or minute without the normal preparatory research and wider consultation process, the following procedures shall apply:

   a. A deadline for receiving proposals from central committee members for any such statements/minutes concerning emergent situations shall be stipulated in an early session of the meeting, giving at least 24 hours' notice. Proposals received after this deadline may not be able to be considered by PIC during that meeting, but may be referred to the General Secretary for consideration and any appropriate action.

   b. Proposals for any such statements/minutes should be accompanied by relevant background information.

   c. Subject to compliance with the above requirements, proposals received will – in accordance with its prescribed mandate *[WCC Constitution and Rules, Rule X.7]* – be received and analysed by PIC, which will make such recommendations and prepare such texts for action by the central committee as it considers appropriate.

7. PIC will report to the central committee on all proposals received, and provide a rationale for its recommendations in relation to each (including reference, where relevant, to ways in which the issues concerned already have been or are being addressed by WCC).

8. Recommendations by PIC to the central committee concerning draft texts or proposals for action may, inter alia, include:
   - Approval of a final draft text as either a public statement or minute.
   - Referral to another appropriate committee.
   - Referral to the general secretary for consideration and any appropriate action.
   - Deferral to a subsequent meeting (pending further research and/or consultation).
   - No action.

9. Any statements/minutes containing recommendations for a programmatic response by WCC shall be referred to and processed by the programme committee or the policy reference committee, as appropriate."

C. MINUTE ON RACIAL TENSIONS IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

(Reaction to the Decision of the Grand Jury not to Indict in the Case of the Killing of Michael Brown)

The executive committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting in Cyprus, 21-26 November 2014, learned with deep sadness and concern of the grand jury's decision not to indict Officer Darren Wilson in the murder of Michael Brown and subsequent serious tensions in the city of Ferguson, Missouri and protests in other parts of the United States of America.

The executive committee of the World Council of Churches welcomes and supports the statement of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA and together with them:

(a) expresses deep disappointment with the decision of the grand jury, sitting in Clayton, Missouri, not to indict Officer Wilson in the murder of Michael Brown
(b) believes that without an indictment, it seems unlikely that justice will be done
(c) reiterates a call in the time of serious tension for the city of Ferguson and its citizens, law enforcement officials, justice-seekers, and others to respond in a non-violent manner
(d) expresses appreciation to the churches and faith communities in St. Louis, Missouri who have declared themselves to be "sanctuary churches" and "sacred spaces."

The executive committee hopes and prays that churches and faith communities throughout the United States of America will continue their role as peace-makers and fulfil their ministries of reconciliation during these difficult times.

D. ACTIONS ON PUBLIC ISSUES, FROM JULY – NOVEMBER 2014

The following actions have been taken on public issues since the actions on public issues reported in the last meeting of the central committee (2-8 July 2014, in Geneva, Switzerland):

AFRICA
2014

8 July	**Statement on the state of human rights in Eritrea**, adopted by the WCC Central Committee, expressing deep concern over the degrading state of human rights in Eritrea and the impact on the lives of thousands of innocent Eritreans.
5 August	Letter from the WCC acting general secretary to the Liberian Council of Churches, expressing deep and shared concern to its member churches in West Africa concerning the Ebola crisis and its devastating impact on the lives of men, women and children living in **Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea** and **Nigeria**.
5 November	Statement by the WCC general secretary about attacks on the Church of the Brethren in **Nigeria** (EYN) and the Kulp Bible college, among other churches in Nigeria, expressing profound dismay.
7 November	Letter from the WCC general secretary to the Hon. Dr Goodluck Jonathan, President of the **Federal Republic of Nigeria**, expressing deep concern on the abduction of more than 200 young women, as well on the attacks on churches by elements linked to Boko Haram, and urging the government to provide for the security of the Nigerian people.
14 November	Meeting by WCC general secretary and Director of International Affairs with H.E. Mr Umunna Humphrey Orjiako, Ambassador of the Permanent Mission of the **Federal Republic of Nigeria** to the United Nations in Geneva, to discuss the situation in northern Nigeria.

ASIA-PACIFIC
2014

15 June	Joint submission to the UN Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the Republic of Kiribati, 21st Session, on the Human Rights Situation in **Kiribati,** by Franciscans International, Edmund Rice International and the CCIA/WCC.
8 July	**Statement on the Re-interpretation of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution**, adopted by the WCC Central Committee, expressing its grave concern at the direction indicated by the Japanese government's initiative to reinterpret or change article 9 of the constitution, and its impact on regional security, on the positive example provided by this constitutional prohibition, and on efforts towards global peace and non-violence;

5 August	Statement by the WCC acting general secretary on the **69th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki** in 1945, stating that these tragedies are to be remembered and must never happen again.
6 August	Meeting of WCC President for Asia and a delegation of Japanese religious leaders with Chief Cabinet Secretary of **Japan**, Mr Yoshihide Suga, to convey two recent statemenst by the WCC Central Committee related to nuclear dangers and to preserving the peace clause in Japan's constitution.
7 August	WCC invitation to its member churches to join in prayer for peace and reunification of the **Korean peninsula** on Sunday, 10 August.
14 August	Message of solidarity from the WCC acting general secretary to the "Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan", **Republic of Korea.**
10 October	Congratulations by the WCC general secretary to Malala Yousafzai, **Pakistan**, and Kailash Satyarthi, **India**, the two children's rights activists who won this year's Nobel Peace Prize.
10-13 October	WCC delegation visit to Pyongyang, **Democratic People's Republic of Korea**.
28 October	Statement by the WCC general secretary over rejection of an appeal against the death sentence for a Pakistani Christian woman, Asia Bibi, convicted under **Pakistan**'s controversial blasphemy law.
11 November	Statement by the WCC general secretary condemning the recent killing of a Christian couple by an angry mob in **Pakistan**, and expressing serious concern about Pakistan's blasphemy law.

EUROPE
2014

18 July	Letters of condolence from the WCC to Dr Margaret Chan, Director-General of the WHO and Mr Michel Sidibé, Under-Secretary-General of the UN/ Executive Director of UNAIDS, expressing sorrow at the loss of nearly 300 lives in an airplane disaster over **Ukraine**.
22 July	Message of solidarity from the WCC to its member churches in the **Netherlands**, conveying sincere condolences to the families of some 193 Dutch passengers who lost their lives in the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 over Ukraine, en route from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur.
31 July	Letter from the WCC general secretary to Mr Andreas Loverdos, Minister of Education and Religious Affairs, **Greece**, regarding a bill to the Greek Parliament to settle the long awaited, unresolved issue of the "legal personality" of the religious institutions in Greece.

MIDDLE EAST
2014

1 July	Pastoral letter from the WCC general secretary on the death of three **Israeli** teenagers, expressing sorrow and offering prayers for their families, and offering prayers for the establishment of peace with justice for all.
8 July	**Statement on Economic Measures and Christian Responsibility toward Israel and Palestine**, adopted by the WCC Central Committee, reaffirming churches' solidarity with those working for peace with justice in Palestine and Israel and encouraging churches to

make responsible decisions regarding their investments which have an impact on the current situation in the region.

8 July	**Statement on the current situation in Mosul, Iraq**, adopted by the WCC Central Committee, expressing great concern about the tragic developments of the situation in Iraq, where hundreds of thousands of people have fled the second largest city in Iraq because of the violence and raids by the "Islamic State", a terrorist group formerly known as the "Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham" (ISIS).
10 July	Statement by the WCC general secretary, strongly condemning attacks by the Israeli military on the civilian population in **Gaza**, as well as firing of rockets by militants from Gaza to Israel, and urging the UN Security Council to demand an immediate end to all kinds of violence from all parties to the conflict.
21 July	Statement by the WCC general secretary, expressing concern over the exodus of the Christian community from Mosul, **Iraq**, occurring due to threats from the self-proclaimed Islamic Sate of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).
22 July	Statement by the WCC general secretary expressing grave concern over the escalation of military operations in **Gaza**, and calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities
7 August	Open letter of solidarity from the WCC acting general secretary to all member churches soliciting prayers for the Christians, the church communities and the people on the Plain of Nineveh in northern **Iraq**, as well as the surrounding region, and asking the member churches to apply pressure on their governments to call for an end to the brutal aggression of ISIS.
7 August	Letter from the WCC acting general secretary to H.E. Mr Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General, calling for an immediate response to the killing of Christians and others in northern **Iraq** by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) militant fighters.
28-31 August	WCC staff visit to northern **Iraq**, meeting with religious leaders and community members to assess the situation of heightened violence and displacement due to attacks by militants of the self-proclaimed "Islamic State" (IS), and calling for increased humanitarian response and responsibility to protect populations in northern Iraq.
1 September	Written statement by the CCIA/WCC at the Special Session of the UN Human Rights Council on the human rights situation in **Iraq**, asking the UNHRC to mandate an urgent mission and joint report – including the special rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief – drawing on the experiences of minority communities in northern Iraq victimized by the self-proclaimed "Islamic State" (IS).
1 September	Oral intervention delivered by CCIA/WCC at the Special Session of the UN Human Rights Council on the human rights situation in **Iraq.**
18 September	Letter from the WCC general secretary to WCC member churches and central committee members, encouraging participation in the **World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel (WWPPI)**, 21 – 27 September 2014, and inviting expressions of solidarity with Palestinian prisoners unjustly detained in Israeli jails. The WWPPI this year addressed the theme "Let my people go!" drawing attention to the situation of Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails and Palestinians living under military occupation seeking liberation and dignity.
1 October	The WCC general secretary has welcomed the publication of an open letter by a group of 126 Muslim scholars to Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, leader of the self-proclaimed **"Islamic**

State" (IS) and his followers. The letter, issued on 24 September, condemns actions of the IS from an Islamic religious perspective.

1 October — Letter from the WCC general secretary to H.E. Ioannis Kasoulides, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the **Republic of Cyprus**, expressing interest in his initiative, with his Polish counterpart, to use the mechanisms of the European Union for the dual purposes of protecting religious minorities in the Middle East and North Africa, and of addressing islamophobia in Europe.

14 October — Letter from the WCC general secretary to H.H. Aram I and H.H. Karekin II, condemning the terrorist attack on the sacred sanctuary of the Holy Martyrs Church of Deir ez-Zor, **Syria**, a memorial and place of worship belonging to the Catholicosate of Cilicia.

18 November — Statement by the WCC general secretary expressing concern and sadness over the attack on a synagogue in west Jerusalem, which resulted in the killing of four Jewish worshippers, and asking that all responsible authorities – including civil, religious and law enforcement – take proactive steps to prevent any reprisals by extremist groups.

NORTH AMERICA

2014

21 August — Letter from the WCC general secretary to the Interfaith Partnership of Greater St. Louis, **USA**, calling for an end to conflict in the aftermath of the tragic killing by a police officer of Michael Brown, an unarmed eighteen-year-old African American man, and the dangerous escalation of violence in the several days following.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND CLIMATE JUSTICE

2014

17 July — Decision adopted by the WCC Central Committee to add **fossil fuels** to the list of sectors where the WCC does not invest, in addition to, among other areas, weapons, nuclear energy and genetically modified organisms.

21 September — Statement adopted at the **Interfaith Summit on Climate Change**, jointly organised by the WCC and Religions for Peace, held in New York City, calling for concrete actions to curb carbon emissions.

HUMAN RIGHTS, PEACE AND SECURITY

2014

8 July — **Statement towards a Nuclear-free World**, adopted by the WCC Central Committee, recommending ways for churches to work to end nuclear dangers and respond to the witness of those affected by continuing nuclear tragedies – from Hiroshima in 1945 to Fukushima in 2011 and beyond.

14 September — **Recommendations to protect the Stateless and end Statelessness**, adopted at an international ecumenical consultation, organized by the WCC and Kerk in Actie in Den Dolder, Netherlands, prior to the UNHCR Global Forum on Statelessness.

17 September — **Recommendations to protect the Stateless and end Statelessness**, presented by a WCC delegation at the UNHCR First Global Forum on Statelessness in The Hague, Netherlands, highlighting issues like childhood statelessness, gender discrimination in nationality laws and responses to statelessness.

25 September — Eight more governments ratify the **Arms Trade Treaty** during this week's high-level meetings at the United Nations. The latest actions mean that 53 governments, including several lobbied by the member churches of the WCC, have ratified the new treaty. The treaty will come into effect by the end of 2014.

APPENDIX VI: DATES AND VENUES OF FUTURE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

COMMITTEE	DATES	VENUE
2015		
Central Committee Leadership	7-12 March	Jerusalem
Executive Committee	8-13 June	Etchmiadzin, Armenia
Central Committee Leadership	September	(locations to be determined)
Executive Committee	13-18 November	Bossey, Switzerland
2016		
Central Committee Leadership	January	Geneva, Switzerland
Executive Committee	10-16 April (tbc)	(location to be determined)
Executive Committee	20-21 June	Trondheim, Norway
Central Committee	22-28 June	Trondheim, Norway
Central Committee Leadership	September/October	Geneva, Switzerland
Executive Committee	November	Bossey, Switzerland
2017		
CC Leadership	February	Geneva, Switzerland
Executive Committee	May/June	(location to be determined)
Executive Committee	November	(location to be determined)
2018		
Central Committee Leadership	January	Geneva, Switzerland
Executive Committee	Mar/April	(location to be determined)
Executive Committee	June/July (2 days)	Geneva, Switzerland
Central Committee	June/July	Geneva, Switzerland
Central Committee Leadership	Sept/Oct	Geneva, Switzerland
Executive Committee	November	(location to be determined)
2019		
Central Committee Leadership	February	Geneva, Switzerland
Executive Committee	May/June	(location to be determined)
Central Committee Leadership	August	Geneva, Switzerland
Executive Committee	November	(location to be determined)
2020		
Central Committee Leadership	January	Geneva, Switzerland
Executive Committee	Mar/April	Bossey, Switzerland
Executive Committee	June/July (2 days)	Geneva, Switzerland
Central Committee	June/July	Geneva, Switzerland
Central Committee Leadership	August	Geneva, Switzerland
Executive Committee	November	(location to be determined)
2021		
CC Leadership	Jan/Feb	Geneva, Switzerland
Executive Committee	May/June	Geneva/Bossey, Switzerland
11th Assembly		(location to be determined)

Note to the Minutes

The following was noted as the amendment to the minutes; it will be added to section 14.1.7:

> The general secretary later noted that all documents that are presented to the executive committee are first reviewed and approved by the general secretary. No document comes to the executive committee unless it has been authorized by him first.
>
> He also noted that the paper on anti-Semitism will continue to be revised and improved upon by staff, incorporating the feedback from the executive committee members at this meeting. A revised paper will be given to the executive committee for further review at an upcoming meeting. The further revised paper will be circulated to the central committee for discussion in June 2016.

(Executive committee meeting, June 2015, Etchmiadzin, Armenia)